

**PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS SOCIAL MEDIA USE IN
COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENTS OF REGULATORY AUTHORITIES IN MBABANE
ESWATINI**

by

VAINAH GUMISE

Submitted in accordance with requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the subject of

COMMUNICATION SCIENCE

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

Supervisor: Prof.Stefan Sonderling

February 2021

DEDICATION

To my mom, dad and brother who yearn to see me scaling unimaginable heights, I have completed yet another lap.

As I step up to new challenges, your faith in me will forever be my driver.

Here's to making it count.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- I would like to express my gratitude to the Department of Communication Science for creating this great learning platform which I am confident will unlock boundless opportunities for me and the many students who undertook this programme.
- My gratitude also goes to Ms MA van Gass, the Communication Science Post graduate Course Coordinator, for professionally attending to all my administrative needs throughout the programme. To my supervisor Professor Stefan Sonderling, you put in endless hours to help me improve my work, you urged me on through the most complex academic periods yet and never stopped believing in me. For that I am forever grateful.
- To the University of South Africa whose vision is "...to help the people of Africa achieve their dreams through open distance learning", I am proud to have been nurtured in your professional institution.
- Lastly, to my fellow course mates and class of 2021, may you step into the world and engrave your solid mark- a whole world awaits you.

ABSTRACT

Social media are common channels for organisational communication the world over. This study explores the perceptions and attitudes towards social media that encourage or impede the effective use of such media in communication departments in Mbabane Eswatini. To ascertain this, the researcher undertakes a robust literature review to determine the sources of these perceptions as encapsulated in the problem statement of the study.

Thereafter, the researcher thereby conducts an exploratory study on four regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini and uses an open-ended questionnaire to obtain the qualitative data. Additionally, secondary data sources are analysed which include social media pages of the study population, newspapers, reports, research papers, e-books and journals. Summartively the research finds largely positive perceptions towards social media use in regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini with most communication officers taking part in this study regarding social media as beneficial platforms due to their measurability, affordability and wide reach.

Furthermore, the study outlines the theory of social media usage further highlighting the growing importance of social media as salient features in the private and organisational lives of present-day societies.

As established from the study, social media can be beneficial as they can foster business relationships sorely through virtual interactions as outlined in the literature review. Additionally, social predispositions and organisational norms can influence perceptions and attitudes towards social media use. Over and above the use of these media for organisational communication, they can promote departmental efficiency as expressed by the respondents in this study.

Key words: social media; perceptions; attitudes; regulatory authorities; communication Departments; new media; digital media; determinants; level of use; Eswatini

Table of Contents

<u>DEDICATION</u>	ii
<u>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</u>	iii
<u>ABSTRACT</u>	iv
<u>List of Tables</u>	viii
<u>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</u>	ix
<u>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</u>	10
<u>1.1 Introduction</u>	10
<u>1.2 The nature of social media and attitudes towards their use</u>	10
<u>1.3 The research question and sub-questions</u>	12
<u>1.4.1 Literature review</u>	13
<u>1.4.2 Theoretical framework for analysis</u>	14
<u>1.5 Research methods and sampling</u>	16
<u>1.6 Justification of the study</u>	18
<u>1.7 Structure of the study</u>	19
<u>1.8 Conclusion</u>	20
<u>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW</u>	21
<u>2.1 Introduction</u>	21
<u>2.2 Historical context of social media</u>	21
<u>2.3. Characteristics and perceptions of social media use in organisational communication</u>	22
<u>2.4 Determinants to social media use in organisational communication</u>	25
<u>2.5 Organisational use and perceptions on social media</u>	26
<u>2.6 Theoretical framework</u>	29
<u>2.6.1 New Media Theories</u>	29
<u>2.6.2 Media Ease of use models</u>	30
<u>2.6.3 Dissonance theories</u>	35
<u>2.6.4 McLuhan's The Medium Is the Message Theory</u>	37
<u>2.6.5 Bem's Self Perception Theory</u>	38
<u>2.6.6 The Social Media Assimilation Model to be used in this research</u>	39
<u>2.6.7 Supporting theories to the Social Media Assimilation Model</u>	40
<u>2.6.8 Contrasting theories to the Social Media Assimilation Model</u>	41
<u>2.7 Conclusion</u>	41
<u>CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGY</u>	42
<u>3.1 Introduction</u>	42
<u>3.2 Contextualisation of research objectives to the study</u>	43
<u>3.2.1 Key research themes</u>	44
<u>3.3 The research design</u>	45

<u>3.3.1 The research population</u>	45
<u>3.3.2 The target population</u>	46
<u>3.3.3 Targeted research participants</u>	46
<u>3.4. Selection of the sample population</u>	48
<u>3.4.1 The sample strategy</u>	48
<u>3.4.2 The snowball sampling method</u>	48
<u>3.4.3 The accessible population</u>	49
<u>3.5 Data collection methods</u>	51
<u>3.5.1 Secondary data collection</u>	51
<u>3.5.2 Secondary data collection techniques</u>	52
<u>3.5.3 Ethical clearance</u>	54
<u>3.5.4 Obtaining consent for the study</u>	55
<u>3.5.5 Data collection process</u>	56
<u>3.5.6 Primary data collection</u>	56
<u>3.6 Influence of the literature review and theoretical framework on questionnaire</u>	57
<u>3.7 Structure of the questionnaire</u>	58
<u>3.8 Data Analysis</u>	58
<u>3.8.1 Data capturing process</u>	59
<u>3.8.2 Thematic analysis and coding</u>	60
<u>3.9 Conclusion</u>	68
<u>4.1 Introduction</u>	70
<u>4.2 Data capturing and segmentation</u>	70
<u>4.3 Demographic information and educational background</u>	70
<u>4.4 Access to ICT's and computer proficiency</u>	72
<u>4.5 Organisational information</u>	74
<u>4.6 Social media perceptions and attitudes</u>	79
<u>4.7 Social media usage preferences</u>	82
<u>4.8 Social media experiences</u>	83
<u>4.9 Organisational social media platforms</u>	85
<u>4.9.1 Type of Facebook posts</u>	85
<u>4.9.2 Number of Facebook posts</u>	87
<u>4.10 Facebook audience responses</u>	87
<u>4.11 YouTube</u>	89
<u>4.12 Linked In</u>	90
<u>4.13 Conclusion</u>	91
<u>5.1Introduction</u>	92
<u>5.2 Thematic analysis</u>	92

<u>5.3. Contextualisation to Theoretical Framework</u>	95
<u>5.4 Descriptive data analysis</u>	96
<u>5.5 Conclusion</u>	103
<u>6.1: Introduction</u>	105
<u>6.2 Recapitulation of research questions and problem statement</u>	105
<u>6.3 Determinants to social media use</u>	106
<u>6.3.1 Social media experiences</u>	106
<u>6.3.2 Organisational departments</u>	107
<u>6.3.3 Organisational policies and strategies</u>	107
<u>6.3.4. Tenure in organisation and designation of roles</u>	107
<u>6.3.5 Availability of organisational social media budgets</u>	108
<u>6.3.6 Accessibility and computer proficiency</u>	108
<u>6.3.7 Demographic factors and educational background</u>	108
<u>6.3.8 Social reality</u>	109
<u>6.3.9 Social media characteristics, perceptions and attitudes</u>	109
<u>6.4 Similarities and differences of findings with other studies and models</u>	109
<u>6.5. Limitations of the study</u>	111
<u>6.6 Implications of the study</u>	111
<u>6.7 Recommendations</u>	112
<u>6.8 Summative outline</u>	114
<u>6.9 Conclusion</u>	115
<u>Sources consulted</u>	116
<u>APPENDICES</u>	Error! Bookmark not defined.

List of Tables

Table 1: Targeted research participants	47
Table 2: Accessible population	51
Table 3. Semi structured questions	58
Table 4 Unique Questionnaire Responses	64
Table 5 Coding and data analysis	68
Table 6 Access to ICT's and computer proficiency	74
Table 7: Organisational information	79
Table 8: Social media perceptions and attitudes	82
Table 9: Social media usage preferences	83
Table 10: 4.8.2 Social media experiences	84
Table 11: FSRA Facebook posts January 2017-2019	85
Table 12: EEA Facebook posts January 2017-2019	85
Table 13: ESERA Facebook posts January 2017-2019	86
Table 14: EIPA Facebook posts January 2017- 2019	87
Table 15: Facebook activities 2017	88
Table 16: Facebook activities 2018	88
Table 17: YouTube activity as at 01 February 2020	89
Table 18: FSRA Facebook social media messages as at 01January 2019	98
Table 19: EEA Facebook social media messages as at 1 January 2019	99
Table 20: EIPA Facebook social media messages as at 1 January 2019	100
Table 21: ESERA Facebook Social Media Messages as at 1 January 2019	102

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CIC	: Construction Industry Council
ESCCOM	: Eswatini Communications Commission
ESERA	: Eswatini Energy Regulatory Authority
EEA	: Eswatini Environmental Authority
EIPA	: Eswatini Investment Promotion Authority
EPPRA	: Eswatini Public Procurement Regulatory Agency
ETA	: Eswatini Tourism Authority
FSRA	: Financial Services Regulatory Authority
ICTs	: Information and Communication Technologies

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study explores perceptions and attitudes that are held towards social media use in regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini and the source of such attitudes. Since the advent of the social media revolution, social media have become commonplace in the workplace with these technologies fast becoming an unescapable and necessary element of everyday life in the modern office.

Whilst these media are described as enhancing organisational efficiencies by fostering timely, boundless and interactive communication with consumers some institutions believe that these social media can be disruptive to the running of organisational functions. This research examines perceptions and attitudes towards social media usage held by employees in communication departments of regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini, formerly known as Swaziland in view of the dynamics of these media which are perceived as having brought a myriad of problems and solutions to the workplace. From reliability and task efficiency to privacy and security problems, social media have had diverse effects on communication departments in Eswatini. The researcher therefore explores social media and ascertains how perceptions of them influence Eswatini authorities to embrace or neglect these media.

This is based on the assumption that attitudes towards a communication medium can determine its perceived usefulness for individuals or organisations. Another factor that influences the integration of social media into the workplace is their nature as pointed out by Rice (1995) who outlines how enhanced access to wireless internet is becoming omnipresent and enhancing time spent on social media networks. Hence this research equally explores the extent to which social media characteristics influence their levels of use in the institutions under study.

1.2 The nature of social media and attitudes towards their use

The researcher therefore starts by looking into definitions and classifications of social media in different societal contexts and additionally looks into the determinants of the perceptions and attitudes that are held towards these media. Boyd and Ellison (2008) define social media as platforms to create profiles and make explicit and traverse relationships, whilst Digo and Keller (2009) define social media as sets of information technologies that facilitate interactions and networking. Allan (2005:5) additionally defines the internet as “a collection of computer networks that are physically connected to each other and have the ability to read...specific communication called Internet Protocol” whilst Lowe, Edward and Lomax (1996) define the World Wide Web as a network based distribution hypertext system comprising of macro

literacy, problem exploration, structured browsing and interconnected general hypertext systems.

These definitions are significant as they acknowledge the interconnection of digital media and the interactive nature of social media which is underlined through the establishment of “explicit and traverse relationships”. The researcher additionally notes how the types of relationships that social media foster mould perceptions and attitudes towards its use within the research population, and also explores descriptions, definitions and classifications of these media in different geographical settings and contexts.

In that light the researcher starts with Africa, where social media are labelled as being “banal and gossipy” particularly in Uganda in line with the bias and perceptions of the country’s government. This is confirmed by the introduction of social media tax to reduce gossip on these platforms as reported by Ugandan journalist, Patience Akumu in July 2018 on the Al Jazeera news channel.

Further afield in the United States of America (USA), the American Congress describe social media as important avenues to exercise free speech (Brannon 2019), whilst American journalist Carr (2018) describes Twitter, a social media platform as the fly wheel of potent calls and response feedback loops that the American president commands and can use seemingly at whim to manipulate the press and the public.

These divergent classifications and perceptions of social media have increasingly led to responsive actions to promote, limit, regulate or control these media particularly in countries such as China and India where governments perceive social media as platforms for the peddling of falsehoods.

Eswatini on the other hand has not yet necessarily taken a restrictive hard-line stance on social media use in both people’s private and work lives. However, few anecdotal stories in the mainstream media outline the controversies that social media might torch in the Swati social media space. One example of this, is the case of a Swaziland Sugar Association Employee, Mpendulo Perfectionist Simelane who was dismissed from his company for writing a controversial Facebook post on a rape trial that was ensuing in neighbouring South Africa in October 2018.

In response to his social media post Mpendulo Simelane was openly rebuked by his employers who additionally distanced themselves from his post through a press statement in the Times of Eswatini, a local daily newspaper. This case highlighted the potential that social media holds in Eswatini with respect to the blurring of business and personal lines. As a result, the researcher was motivated to explore the actual perceptions and attitudes held towards social

media use at institutional level in Eswatini, given the limited research on this topic in the country.

In order to get a definitive understanding of this, the researcher starts by exploring literature that provides definitions of these attitudes and perceptions with Allport (1935) defining the concept of attitude as the mental and neural state of readiness organised through experiences exerting a diverse or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations. Eagly and Chaiken (1993) on the other hand define attitudes as psychological tendencies that are expressed by evaluating particular entities with some degree of favour or disfavour.

In addition, Crano and Prislin (2006) define attitudes as evaluative judgements that integrate and summarise cognitive or effective reactions. Perceptions on the other hand are defined by Qiong (2017) as the process of attaining awareness by understanding sensory information in philosophical and psychological senses. This definition is further broken down into three stages that include selection, organisation and interpretation. Guyoming and Sharostal (2007) furthermore describe perception from a social angle stating that the subjective nature of the perceptual framework arises from culture often resulting in perception, partiality and inaccuracy.

Samovar, Porter and Stefani (2000) additionally concur to the notion that culture influences perceptions suggesting that there are direct links amongst culture, perceptions and behaviours. These broad definitions of perceptions and attitudes being influenced by culture, experiences or cognitive processes help the researcher to understand the possible perceptive and attitudinal frame of the target population for this research which largely includes communication officers in regulatory authorities in Mbabane as well as employees from other organisational departments who are assigned with social media functions. Summatively, perceptions and attitudes towards social media are moulded by various determinants as noted from the definitions of the various scholars in this study.

1.3 The research question and sub-questions

These concise definitions of the study topic help frame the problem statement of the study which explores how attitudes towards social media determine their usage or rejection as official communication channels in regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini? This is against the backdrop of new trends which make social media important technologies for use in the modern office given how they are far reaching and cheaper to use when executing organisational communication functions. From there researcher develops the main research questions of the study which ask:

- Are social media underutilised within Swati regulatory authorities?
- Are their uses discouraged in Swati regulatory authorities?

and

- Are negative perceptions of social media responsible for the rejection, underutilisation or acceptance of social media use in regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini?

Thereafter, the researcher develops sub-questions to help broadly address the study topic. Sub-questions also make it easier to conduct research because after answering the sub-questions the main research question is answered. The sub questions are as follows:

- To what extent are social media used for the purpose of organisational communication within regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini?
- Is the use of social media preferred by younger officers in communication departments of regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini?
- Do older people use social media in communication departments of regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini?
- Are social media mainly used for communication in the Swati metropolis?
- To what extent are social media used or not used in outlying areas in Eswatini?
- To what degree is Facebook used for official business and communication in regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini?

Having framed the problem statement, research question and sub-questions the researcher additionally explores the determinants to these perceptions and attitudes by reviewing the opinions and ideologies of other scholars on the study topic in a thorough literature review and theoretical analysis.

1.4.1 Literature review

The researcher starts by looking into Benson and Morgan's (2015) description of social media and notes how they define these media as platforms that allow stakeholders to connect to one another in relational international networks. Benson and Morgan (2015) additionally outline how social media enhance the reach to their audiences and have revolutionised the manner in which organisations communicate with their stakeholders due to their immediacy which is a valuable characteristic. Tuninga and Saridakis (2017) concur with this school of thought by also highlighting the advantages of social media through their stimulation of interaction, an element which spurs the researcher to explore whether the communication officers under study perceived social media likewise.

Fusi and Feeney (2016) additionally describe social media as enhancing task efficiency and increasing management complexity and workload in government whilst McAfee (2009) describes present day social media technologies as mature weapons of mass collaboration.

Mc-Mellan (2004) furthermore notes how services are now increasingly being delivered virtually despite service encounters having traditionally relied on human interactions whilst Petterson and Ward (2000) note how social media might offer alternative benefits of convenience and accessibility to clients. Tuninga and Saridakis (2017) also acknowledge the positive characteristics of social media stating how they allow expanded interactions across business to business, business to customer and customer to customer networked relationships.

Singh (2016) on the other hand outlines some complex social media dynamics, stating how the fast-paced transformations brought about by new technology in the field of communication demand prompt intelligent adaptation to enable the efficient flow of information to publics. Eldor (2011) thereby raises a negative outlook on social media describing them as the stuff of corporate nightmares whose posts are written metaphorically “as if in permanent ink” which cannot be erased once a post goes viral.

Newman (2011) concurs outlining how social media are out of control and can bring about organisational conflicts on matters to do with freedom of speech and privacy. McAfee and Porter (2017) go on to state how social media have changed professional communications and outline the importance of gleaning their perceived benefits before using them to communicate organisational messages. In summation, social media are beneficial to use in the workplace given how they promote engagement with wide audiences and can be targeted to specific audiences. Additionally, these media are cost effective whilst their impact can be measured using relevant analytics for each site.

However, despite their advantages, social media are known to distract employees from performing their job functions as they may end up exploiting these platforms for personal purposes during working hours. Moreover these platforms may pose reputational risks if social media administrators post inflammatory or reckless statements on these platforms. Additionally, social media are prone to cyber security risks such as page hacking by third parties which can also affect the organisations reputation if hackers start uploading posts onto the organisational social media pages.

1.4.2 Theoretical framework for analysis

Apart from a literature review presented in Chapter 2, the researcher also explores the foundational frameworks that expand on the issue of social media and perceptions of their use in the workplace. One such framework is McLuhan's (1964) *The Medium is the Message* Theory which acknowledges the contribution of societal constructs and norms to the use of a particular communication medium. In this theory, McLuhan (1964) explains how societal perceptions of a particular mode of communication determines the acceptance or rejection of

messages disseminated through that platform. McLuhan's theory means that the physical format of the media and the structure of the message itself, or that the dominant mode of communication in society, rather than any content it may communicate, have greater meaning and influence on society. In other words, it is the type of communication media that determines how society thinks and acts rather than society or people determining how they will use the media. McLuhan's theory is thus also known as 'media determinism'.

Another model which explores media perceptions and determinants of their use is Davis' (1989) Technology Acceptance Model, which states how people tend to use an application based on how it improves or does not improve their job functions. In this model, Davis (1989) outlines how perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are determinants of digital media use and definitively describes computer anxiety, internet self-efficacy and perceptions of external control as these determinants. This model thereby implies that people are likely to use social media if they are comfortable in using them and think they can still have control when using these platforms. Therefore, Davis' (1989) Technology Acceptance Model can be used to ascertain whether the same holds true for communication officers in Eswatini's regulatory authorities. Venkatesh and Davis (2000) additionally attribute social influence, cognitive processes and subjective norms as contributors to positive and negative perceptions towards social media use.

This research will also explore Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) which outlines the contribution of attitudinal behaviours to the acceptance or rejection of specific communication platforms in an organisation. Hartwick and Warshaw (1988) equally support this theory arguing that personal attitudes and social factors influence performance behaviours. However it is important to note that not all scholars attribute societal constructs as contributors to the acceptance or rejection of social media use. Brett (2009) for example criticises Davis' (1989) Technology Acceptance Model attributing cost and structural imperatives as key determinants to the acceptance of digital media use versus societal constructs.

Similarly, Parasuraman (2000) attributes other factors aside from societal constructs as contributors to the adoption or rejection of social media use in the workplace, citing optimism, innovativeness, discomfort and insecurities as important contributors to digital media use in the Technological Readiness Index. Colstein and Cialdini's (2007) Self Perception Theory on the other hand posits that people sometimes inform their own attributes and attitudes by observing the freely chosen actions of others with whom they feel a merged sense of identity. This suggests that, the use of social media for organisational communication by the Eswatini Energy Regulatory Authority (ESERA) can inspire the same action by the Eswatini

Environmental Authority (EEA). On the contrary the rejection of social media use for organisational communication by the Financial Services Regulatory Authority (FSRA) may influence the Eswatini Investment Promotion Authority (EIPA) to equally shun social media use in their organisational communication. This literal context in relation to the actual research population helps to explain Colstein and Cialdini's (2007) hypothesis and further helps us to mould the research design.

The researcher will also explore Davis' (1989) Perceived Usefulness and Ease of Use Model, which outlines how people are likely to use an application if they perceive it to be easy to use or useful in terms of fulfilling their job functions. This model is in line with the study as it will help to determine whether the communication officers in the regulatory authorities under study perceive social media as easy to use or useful to fulfilling their job functions. Contrasting scholars to this Perceived Usefulness and Ease of use Model such as Ajibade (2018) will also be assessed together with their arguments that the model is not robust enough to explain user behaviour.

Moreover, Fishbein and Ajzen's (1980) Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) will also be analysed and contextualised to the study by the researcher in light of its postulation that people take actions as a result of their conscious and rational reasoning. In that vein, the researcher will assess whether the use of social media by the communication officers in the institutions under study is a result of rational reasoning and not coerced action due to societal pressures.

Should the social media usage levels of the research population be influenced by social pressures from alternate institutions, this would be in line with Rodgers' (1955) Diffusion of Innovation Theory which postulates that an innovation in a system eventually leads to its adoption. This would therefore imply that, if social media starts being used by some regulators for organisational communication, other regulators will likely follow suit. The researcher will also explore Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory which equally posits that behaviour is influenced by interactions between people's traits and thinking as well as their social environments. These theoretical frameworks are therefore instrumental to the understanding of social media behaviours and perceptions in the study population.

1.5 Research methods and sampling

The researcher undertakes, a qualitative approach on the accessible population to help establish the determinants of the perceptions and attitudes held by the communication officers under study. This type of exploratory research design has been selected due to its suitability for investigative studies on human demographics, behaviours and social interactions.

The study population will include four Eswatini regulatory authorities namely, FSRA, EIPA, ESERA and EEA. Ten officers from these institutions will be sampled with a minimum of two officers from each institution. The targeted officers for the data collection exercise will largely include stakeholder and consumer affairs officers, marketing officers, information and technology officers and other officers who are assigned with social media functions in their respective institutions. This will be a representative sample as it will include multiple officers with different social media experiences and competencies as well as different perceptions and attitudes towards the use of these media for organisational communication in their departments.

Primary and secondary data collection methods will be used to obtain the required data which will include questionnaires for primary data whilst books journals, research papers and newspapers will be used to obtain secondary data. The questionnaires for this study will be administered on a one- on- one basis given the close proximity of all four regulatory authorities under study to the researcher. Additionally, the researcher will also obtain crucial data from the social media pages of the regulatory authorities under study paying particular attention to the differences and similarities, in social media patterns in these institutions.

The unit of analysis for this study will be perceptions and attitudes as well as the levels of social media use in the institutions under study. Therefore to understand these perceptions and attitudes, the researcher will undertake a textual analysis on the social media pages of the institutions under study paying attention to frequency and type of posts shared by the officers under study.

Additionally, the researcher will analyse the responses of the target or social media audiences to the uploaded posts on the basis of reply frequency, tones, likes, dislikes and shares. This will help the researcher to gauge the responsiveness of the target audiences to social media posts and help gauge the effect that this responsiveness has on the frequency and type of posts uploaded by the communication officers under study. Such a correlation will help outline the extent to which perceptions and attitudes on the usefulness and effectiveness of social media determine their levels of use for organisational communication.

As part of the data collection the researcher will employ the snowball sampling method as a convenience sampling method which is advantageous where some of the respondents are not available to participate as was the case in this study. Additionally the researcher will analyse the demographic information of the research respondents on the basis of age and gender together with their educational competencies. Moreover, the researcher will assess organisational information which will include the officer's tenure on their jobs, organisational social media levels and budgetary allocations for social media amongst other determinants for

social media use in the institutions under study. Research findings will be presented qualitatively and in tabular format for the systematic presentation of data.

In conducting this study, the researcher assumes that the responses to the questionnaires by the study population will be truthful. As recommended by Kaiser (2009), it is important for researchers to explain the scope of their studies and the foreseeable risks that may arise to the respondents as a result of participating in these studies. Thus, the researcher provided participant information sheets to the respondents outlining the focus, purpose, and nature of the study before commencing the data collection exercise. The researcher coded the responses of the participants in this study to ensure their privacy and to protect them from identification. Ethical clearance was additionally obtained for the study.

1.6 Justification of the study

Research studies play an important role in identifying gaps that create challenges or hamper progress within societies, therefore in the context of this study perceptions and attitudes can be a gap that can hinder productivity on social media platforms in communication departments of Mbabane's regulatory authorities.

These perceptions and attitudes can strengthen myths about the impact of social media use in organisational communication contributing to the rejection of these new media in some instances. However if positive perceptions and attitudes are held towards social media use for organisational communication departmental productivity can increase. Therefore, this study aims to explore whether social media perceptions and attitudes can create a gap in the communication departments of the study population and recommend means of dispelling these misconceptions where applicable. In turn, this will help to enhance departmental productivity through the adoption of modern social media in the organisational communication functions of Mbabane Eswatini's regulatory authorities.

This research is also motivated by global trends and statistics that outline the growing popularity of social media which are now used by at least half of the global population. According to the Data Reportal (2020), a global trends review website at least 4.4 billion people were using social media by October 2020, translating to about 53% of the global population. Similarly, Kemp (2020) on the same Data Reportal website explains how Eswatini also recorded a 23% social media penetration rate in January 2020 bringing the number of social media users in the country to 260 000 up from 218 000 between April 2019 and January 2020.

This exponential rise in the Swati and global social media usage levels outlines the growing importance of these digital media platforms for both private and business communications.

Hence the researcher is moved to explore the adaptation levels of regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini to these growing modern communication channels to help gauge their efforts to remain relevant in an evolving world and business sphere. Scholars such as Edosomwan (2016) additionally acknowledge the importance of social media describing the present times as decades of information systems where the fastest way to grow businesses is through social media.

Picolli and Wagner (2003) highlight the importance of academic research, which they believe helps abstract from specific problems and develops theories that help to understand the world in the same manner in which this research seeks to. Carmago- Borges and Kasera (2013) add that people are living in times of rapid change where stability and predictability are making way for the fluidity and complexity of contemporary society. It therefore remains to researches such as this one to explore the dynamics of the contemporary societies we find ourselves in order to help us adjust our organisational perceptions and attitudes, in line with the times. This study could furthermore help regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini to benchmark the patterns for their social media use against their fellow regulatory counterparts and keep a pace with new regulatory trends. In the researcher's perspective, this is in line with Colstein and Cialdini's (2007) Self Perception Theory which outlines how people sometimes inform their own attributes and attitudes by observing the freely chosen action of others with whom they feel a merged sense of identity.

In the same light, Picolli and Wagner (2003) outline how, academic research increases the long-term understanding of the role and effects of different phenomena within multiple business and organisational contexts as this study seeks to establish. Additionally this research will help mark a better understanding of social media in Africa and the theory of social media usage and help inform positive practice and progressive policy development to communication departments within and outside the research population. This study is also earmarked to dispel the entrenchment of inaccurate beliefs through learning and shared experiences and is essential due to its exploration of underlying cognitive and social elements that influence organisational behaviour.

1.7 Structure of the study

In Chapter 1, which is the present chapter, the researcher starts by explaining the topic under study and provides background on the research topic through robust definitions and descriptions. Here, the researcher defines the terms and scope of the study together with the research problem statement.

The researcher outlines the research question and sub-questions to help address the problem statement. In Chapter 2, the researcher conducts a thorough analysis of the similar and

contrasting ideologies of related scholars to the communication field of study in a literature review. The researcher develops a theoretical framework in Chapter 3, which outlines models that are in line with the research topic informed largely by communication, sociology and psychology scholars. Moreover, the researcher analyses the supporting and contrasting theoretical models to the research topic. Thereafter, the researcher outlines the qualitative research design that was employed for the study and explains the research methods and the channels that were used to obtain the data for this study. Additionally, researcher explains the advantages and disadvantages of the research methods that were used in this study and expands on the methodology employed.

In Chapter 4, researcher captures, segments and codes the data obtained in the study and tabulates it in order to present it in a systematic manner. This data is presented in two formats namely primary and secondary data, outlining findings from the different data collection methods. Moreover, the researcher conducts a thematic analysis and weighs the key findings against the research questions and problem statement to check for synchrony. This was done by noting the perceptions and attitudes that were held towards social media use for organisational communication in the research population together with their determinants.

Lastly in Chapters 5 and 6, the researcher draws conclusions in line with the research objectives and outlines the limitations of the study and their implications thereof. The researcher also outlines the contribution of the study to a better understanding of social media in Africa and to the theory of social media use. Thereafter the researcher presents a set of recommendations for the research population and other communication departments outside the study with respect to social media perceptions, attitudes and their influence on social media use.

1.8 Conclusion

In this chapter the researcher outlined the rationale for conducting the study as well as the channels and methods to be employed to obtain information for this exploratory study. As the researcher delves deeper with this study chapter by chapter one question echoes in their mind, what perceptions and attitudes are held towards social media use in communication departments of regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini and to what extent do these perceptions and attitudes influence social media use in these institutions.

In the next chapter, the researcher explores the ideologies of other scholars on perceptions and attitudes towards social media use by conducting a robust literature review. The researcher also assesses the postulations of different theorists on the research topic from early to present day theorists.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of research literature and theoretical frameworks on social media in order to help the researcher address the research questions and problem statement of the study. The outline of literary works and theories of different scholars on social media will help the researcher to track whether these ideologies are in line with perceptions and attitudes that are held towards the use of these media in Mbabane's regulatory authorities.

Furthermore the research seeks to determine whether social media are underutilised or their use discouraged within Swati regulatory authorities. It will also determine how attitudes towards these media determine their use or rejection in these institutions.

Thus, in order to gauge the contribution of these factors to social media use or neglect, the researcher reviews the works of many scholars from 1955 to present in order to understand their physiological and sociological perspectives regarding digital media use in the workspace. As a prelude to this study, the researcher starts by looking into the early days of social media in the 1960s and their considerations for use as organisational communication platforms. Thereafter, the researcher assesses what diverse scholars perceive as influential factors to these perceptions and attitudes.

In view of the main objective of the research which is to identify perceptions and attitudes towards social media use in communication departments of regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini, the researcher also reviews research that identifies perceptions and attitudes towards social media use in non -regulatory organisations which have similar characteristics to regulatory authorities in order to gain broader organisational perspectives on social media use for organisational communication. The researcher also references the ideologies of diverse scholars and contributors to this study topic, which include psychologists, philosophers and communication theorists.

2.2 Historical context of social media

One of the early communication theorists who wrote about an earlier format of social media is Jurgen Habermas. He postulated about the "public sphere" and its transformation. Habermas (1962:176) defined the public sphere "...as a virtual or imaginary community which does not necessarily exist in any identifiable space" and further described the public sphere as being made up of private people gathered together as a public and articulating the needs of society with the state. It can be argued that Habermas' idea of virtual characteristics of the public sphere is similar to our contemporary electronic media which characteristically have clusters of people with the same or dissenting perspectives.

As early as 1962, Habermas postulated how the public sphere generated opinions and attitudes that served to affirm or challenge the affairs of the state. However Habermas was cautious of the public sphere even in the early days as he outlined how the misuse of publicity could undermine the public sphere, such has equally been the case and concern in the early days of social media adoption for organisational use.

Westin (2003) concurs with Habermas (1962) by outlining the impact of new digital media on society whose arrival has equally generated important privacy debates at academic, political and social level. Benson (2015) goes on to support this view acknowledging the importance of social media as vital tools in the personal, educational and professional lives of people adding that social networking helps the world to be connected. However Benson (2015) points out the importance of examining or determining any possible pitfalls that might be associated with the use of these technologies.

McLuhan (1964) is another theorist who also discussed about the social media idea where he outlined how interactive electronic media were powerful and had the potential to link all people on a global scale. This was outlined when McLuhan (1964) explained how the world was beginning to notice how new media were not just mechanical gimmicks for creating words of illusion but were in fact new languages with unique powers of expression.

Another theorist who discussed about the social media idea is Castels (2009) through the Theory of Networked Power where he mentioned the development of computing and the internet as being the foundations of social media since social media was built on virtual computing and computer networks.

These postulations point out to the anticipated dual effects of social media technologies, outlining the mixed perceptions and attitudes that are held towards social media integration in the business sphere. It is however important to fully understand the characteristics of social media that give rise to these perceptions and attitudes in the first place. These characteristics include the dynamic and uncontrollable nature of its platforms which give more liberties to consumers to express themselves in comparison to traditional organisational communication platforms. With that in consideration the researcher dissects the perceptions and attitudes held towards social media use for organisational communication within the research population.

2.3. Characteristics and perceptions of social media use in organisational communication

In order to identify these perceptions, Louw (2013) starts by defining the world in which we live as one which places importance on digital communication technologies due to the

abundance of information. Long and Mc-Mellan (2004) note how services are now increasingly being delivered virtually thus displacing the traditional service encounters that traditionally relied on face-to-face human interactions. Therefore, Silvius (2016) shows how communication and promotional possibilities of social media are being leveraged by different organisations enabling direct virtual conversations with potential audiences thus underlining the perceived usefulness of social media in the business sphere.

Patterson and Ward (2000) review the characteristics of social media explaining how some customers may establish relationships with providers based solely on virtual interactions which they might find as offering alternative benefits of convenience and accessibility. Therefore, social media use for organisational communication in these cases would be considered positive as it would extend the reach of organisational messages to consumers who solely rely on virtual interactions for business relationships. Tuninga and Saridakis (2017) equally acknowledge the positive characteristics of social media, stating how these platforms allow expanded interactions across business to business, business to customer and customer to customer networked relationships.

Furthermore, they identify how organisations should align their technological design and managerial capabilities in order to enhance their relational, reputational and interactional capabilities with their end customers and stakeholders.

Summatively, Benson, Tuninga and Saridakis (2017) outline how social media has attracted commercial attention despite having been initially viewed as a grassroots collective initiative with modest business relevance. This proliferation of social media has however not been without its complexities as noted by Singh (2016) who outlines how the change generated by new technology has presented various opportunities in the field of communication with these fast paced transformations demanding prompt and intelligent adaptation in order to continue the efficient flow of information to publics. Silvius (2016) therefore adds how organisations that opt to use social media should have coherent and relevant content strategies, plasticity and careful consideration of how the public will react to their actions on these media.

Additionally, scholars such as Jenkins (2013) further analyse the radical nature of social media giving scope for an assessment of perceptions and reactions towards the use of these media based on social and other normative factors. Mixed feelings towards social media use in organisational communication often go on to stir up false beliefs as people make incorrect inferences from available information in an attempt to make sense of these media and the world around them as stated by Nylon (2016). These dynamics ironically form the very bedrock of this research which seeks to understand the perceptions, attitudes and beliefs held by communication officers in regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini. Furthermore, the

research moves to establish the causal factors for these perceptions that create departmental performance gaps by promoting or discouraging the use of social media in organisational communication.

However, for a holistic view of social media and organisational dynamics it is important to glean the perceptions of a wide range of scholars on the benefits or detriments of using social media in organisational communication. Fusi and Feeney (2016) therefore outline how social media use may actually be disadvantageous in government as its use may enhance task efficiency, increase management complexity as well as workload. These statements follow Fusi and Feeney's (2006) findings of a survey on 2500 public managers in 500 US local governments where they established how perceptions of social media tools in the workplace are influenced by interplays of personal and organisational use of social media, organisational cultures of innovation and formal guidance on social media use. Therefore from this survey, Fusi and Feeney (2016: 401) outline how social media might not necessarily be embraced in local governments if the guidance on its use is in contrast with government policies.

Segaard (2015) proceeds to outline how social media characteristically gives serious liberties to users across the spectrum something that might not necessarily be favourable for the organisation or regulatory authorities given the sensitive nature of their work. Singh (2016) agrees with this viewpoint stating how each consumer nowadays has the power to be a journalist, reviewer or whistle blower a phenomenon which Singh says can alter a brand's reputation with a single viral post or spark a political movement with a hash-tag.

Dewulf (2001) equally acknowledges the seemingly complex social media business dynamics underlining how virtual interactions are likely to threaten service differentiation efforts potentially placing further challenges on organisations in terms of maintaining committed customer bases. Louw (2013) on the other hand brings out another "perilous" social media dynamic, outlining how the web is a fairground of persuaders of various intentions whilst Shutter (2001) notes ethical issues that also arise from the use of these global communication technologies thus building up debates on social media regulation as equally noted by Carr (2018).

In expanding on these technological determinants to social media use, Benson *et al.*, (2017) attribute concerns of limited control on these interactive media as contributing factors to their use or rejection in organisational communication as per a study they conducted on social media use in financial institutions and retail banks. This study which was carried out on two British Banks sought to analyse the "strategic role of social networking in firm growth and productivity" therefore data was collected from the Facebook pages of these banks to establish customer perceptions on the shared content on these platforms. Following the study, Benson

et al., (2017:136) stated, “It is challenging for financial institutions to develop strategies to address customer queries satisfactorily on their social media pages and at the same time work within the roles of compliance regulation”.

This study by Benson *et al.*, (2017) therefore outlined the complexities of dealing with client criticisms on public platforms as the clients were frustrated by the matters handled on the bank’s Facebook page and their responses thereof. In addition, the bank management of these institutions also expressed high uncertainty on the suitability of social media networking in firm’s growth and productivity.

Such sentiments are therefore bound to yield negative attitudes towards the usefulness of these media, something Segard (2015) confirms by stating, “If social media are to become significant platforms for communication both groups need to perceive these media as useful means of communication”. Tuninga and Saridakis (2017) however note optimism in the use of social media by asset management companies whom they describe as highly appreciating the interconnectedness that social media bring to organisations. This alternative observation is highly important for this research, given how asset management companies are close in organisational context to regulatory authorities who are as conservative as they are. This therefore raises the likelihood of similar positive perceptions on social media benefits by the regulatory authorities under this study.

In light of the nature on new media in the workplace and the perceptions and attitudes held towards their use, the researcher extended their analysis to ascertain the determinants to these attitudes and the extent of their influence.

2.4 Determinants to social media use in organisational communication

Wang (2008) therefore attributes personality traits, risk appetite, environmental context and coercive pressure as contributing factors to technology acceptance where adaptability to new media technologies and fearless to encounter social media risks can influence the acceptance of social media. In contradiction to this, Valentine and Powers (2003) attribute age as a determinant to social media use believing that Generation Y’s has a positive attitude to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) which are already a common element in their lives.

Fam (2004) explores the influence of religion and deeply founded beliefs towards the use of digital media technologies by assessing attitudes towards the advertising of particular controversial products. This is similar to Fergus and Melamed (2014) who attribute social experiences and cultural background as being determinants of perceptions towards social media use. Robbins (1991) on the other hand sees attitudes, interests, motives, experiences

and expectations of the receiver as having an influence on that which is perceived. Therefore, if a communication officer in a regulatory authority has had positive experiences with social media use in personal spheres they are likely to have positive attitudes towards their use for organisational communication.

Mitic and Kapoulas (2012) however cite personnel know-how, funding and lack of evidence in turning social media investments into financial returns as contributors to social media use scepticism in banks whilst Parasurami (2000) cites psychographic constructs as other determinants to social media use in organisational communication. This is supported by Randolph and Blackburn (1989) who attribute personality and cognitive differences to social media integration or rejection.

Computer anxiety, internet self-efficacy and perception of external control are also attributed as additional determinants to the use of the interactive media by Olumide (2016) who also interprets cognitive processes as active contributors to social media integration or rejection. These varied contributing elements to social media use are integral to this research as they will help to understand the perceptions and attitudes held by communication officers or other officers assigned with social media duties to the use of these media for organisational communication.

2.5 Organisational use and perceptions on social media

In tying up their research as expressed in their literary works Tuninga and Saridakis (2017) outline how more and more companies are now using social media to gain and retain an ever sophisticated and demanding pool of high-tech savvy customers, an element which enhances the impetus of this research to ascertain whether the same can be said of regulatory authorities in Eswatini. McLeod (2017) therefore outlines how this can additionally be done, by exploring how individuals perceive the world as conditioned by their past experiences and predispositions.

Alsuqri and Aufer (2015) on the other hand acknowledge personal attitudes and social normative factors as exerting influence on behavioural intentions further steering the research towards its key object which is to understand the perceptual process and how it generates attitudes towards a particular medium. In order to put this into clear perspective McLeod (2017) outlines how differences in media experiences are not the only factors that lead to variation in media perceptions” but also outlines how various psychological processes introduce biases into the development of media perceptions. Therefore, this enhances the researchers understanding of the influential factors that contribute to the attitudes and perceptions held towards social media in the research population of this study.

It is however important to be thorough in this behavioural study which should be fully balanced given how such studies often require great depth as equally acknowledged by Lewis (1999) who describes the study of human perceptions as complex, broad and highly interdisciplinary. Jordaan and Jordaan (1996) concur, outlining how the conditions and fundamental aspects of perceptions often transcend the scholarly debates surrounding the perceptual process. Another earlier semantic scholar Cantril (1968) also supports these facts, acknowledging the complexity of the field of perceptions as a “complicated weighing processes” that comes about as a result of a whole host of factors and cues.

This is therefore not to suggest that this epistemological study will be unable to establish the perceptions and attitudes that influence social media use in organisational communication. Instead the emphasis on the complexity of research on perceptions by other semantic scholars encourages the researcher to broaden the scope and depth of this study in order to come up with the most accurate answer to the problem statement of the study.

Lewis (1999) talks about selective perceptions, which are developed when a perceiver hears or sees what he or she wants to see thus explaining how unwarranted conclusions from ambiguous situations end up being drawn by perceivers. Selective perceptions can also be ignited by interpretations that are based on personal interests, background experience and attitudes as further explained by Lewis (1999). This means that if a communication officer or an officer assigned with social media tasks for a regulatory authority in Mbabane Eswatini perceives social media as risky they are likely to be reactive towards the mildest social media comments to their post due to their individual selective perception. This suggestion however is disputed by Jordaan and Jordaan (1996) who state that perceptions are not always individually selected, arguing that there are instances where select groups and individuals have collective and similar perceptions amongst cultural groups. Lewis (1999) further adds another dynamic to the perceptual process arguing that errors may occur in the perceptual process due to an information overload, which is the reason why humans end up applying heuristics to make sense of the information around them.

Nyhan (2016) on the other hand speaks of motivated reasoning which is the tendency to interpret information which is inconsistent with our predispositions saying that sometimes people with higher levels of subject matters and knowledge are better able to align their factual beliefs about controversial issues with their predispositions. However, Nyhan (2016) acknowledges that this is not always the case hence broadly examines the psychology of misperception to explore the processes by which beliefs become politically integrated into individual belief systems. This examination is similar to this study which seeks to understand how perceptions and attitudes towards social media use are developed.

Such studies are important as additionally acknowledged by Nyhan (2016:8) who outlines how their results can "...provide recommendations to public officials to educate journalists and civic groups on how they can more effectively correct myths and counter false beliefs helping to create a stronger factual basis for political debate."

This study is earmarked to also help identify and correct false beliefs about social media use in communication departments of regulatory authorities and promote organisational innovation and productivity. However a change of misperceptions in the research population is not necessarily guaranteed as expressed by Reifer (2013) who outlines how people sometimes have difficulty accurately updating their beliefs after finding out that information that they previously accepted has been discredited. In light of this, it is imperative to carry out a deeper analysis on organisational perceptions and attitudes by further appreciating the works of psychological and communication theorists as means of building a strong theoretical framework for this study. This framework will therefore detail the perspectives that can be taken to address the gaps and shortcomings that were identified in the literature review

However apart from appreciating the characteristics and perceptions towards these media it remains important for one to fully understand the determinants to their use in organisational communication. Lunceford (2009) thus further attributes availability and affordability of ICT instruments as additional determinants to social media use, whilst Rice (2005) attributes the increase of wireless internet and the rapid evolution of mobile phones as other drivers to social media use.

Rice (2005) further outlines the extent to which social media will be incorporated into organisational communication, boldly stating how social media will find a way into our daily lives just as email did. This research therefore seeks to qualify that by assessing the frequency of social media use for organisational communication presently as a measure of how that social media use may transform in the future. This is therefore further explored and outlined through a deep analysis of relevant theoretical models to the study topic which seek to explore the perceptions and attitudes that are held towards social media use in organisational communication.

In this literature review various social and normative factors such as internet self-efficacy, computer anxiety and organisational dynamics have been identified as contributing to social media perceptions and attitudes within organisations whilst various determinants to organisational communication have been outlined. This literature review further describes social media and its characteristics and outlines varied determinants to social media use for organisational communication, according to different scholars.

2.6 Theoretical framework

The researcher also developed a theoretical framework with key models centred on social media usage in the workplace and recapped the main objectives of this research which were to ascertain the actual perceptions and attitudes that are held towards social media use for organisational communication in Mbabane's regulatory authorities. Furthermore the researcher explored the determinants of these perceptions and attitudes as encapsulated in the objectives of this study.

The researcher therefore started by looking at McLuhan as one of the first theorists to speculate on new media and used McLuhan's new media theory as the base for the theoretical framework before expanding to other related theories.

2.6.1 New Media Theories

McLuhan (1964) historically describes the term new media as a relative term, stating that the media that are referred to as old media by others will be wrestling with new media emerging in their time. This description in his 1964 New Media Theory ironically holds such high relevance more than forty years since its development. As a result the researcher wades through this research with awareness of the interchangeability of the word new media in line with different time frames. In closer terms one can say email is no longer the new media it was in the early ninety's just as social media technologies such as Twitter will no longer be regarded as new media at the turn of another decade.

In further describing new media in 1964 McLuhan explained how the world was beginning to notice how new media were not just mechanical gimmicks for creating words of illusion but were in fact new languages with new and unique powers of expression, implying that these media should be taken seriously given the power they wield. Nonetheless, how communications officers of regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini equally view these technologies remains a question of their perceptions and attitudes. Regardless, McLuhan (1964) adds how technology characteristically reverses the characteristics of every situation with its advancement, another dynamic that perhaps spurs the attitudes that are held towards its usefulness for organisational communication within varied communication departments in Mbabane Eswatini.

In acknowledgment of the growing influence of new media and their effect, the researcher also explores Castels' (2009) Theory of Networked Power which touches on digital media and power dynamics by stating how the shape of institutions and organisations that construct human action depend on the specific interaction between power and counter power. This

theory further postulates that power relationships are the foundation of society as institutions and norms are constructed to fulfil the interests and values of those in power.

These postulations thus help us to understand social media as, "... forms of networked power which transform humans into audiences by selling them images of their lives" as explained by Castels (2009). Moreover, they help us to appreciate the power held by global multimedia corporate networks as "power holders of the network societies which programme the digital networks of our time". Furthermore Castels' (2009) Theory of Networked Power also helps us to understand why the managerial and decision-making powers within the research population of this study accept or reject social media use in their organisational communication functions.

Additionally, Castels' (2009) explains the impact of being included or excluded on these digital networks stating how the value of being in the network increases exponentially with the size of the network as proposed in (1976) by Meltcafe's Law but further states how the devaluation attracted to the exclusion from the network also increases exponentially and at a faster rate than does the increase of value of being in the network. Therefore, decision makers within and outside this study's research population have to make well calculated decisions about their inclusion or exclusion from these new media networks given what they stand to gain or lose.

This literature review and theoretical framework thus importantly captures the ideologies of different scholars and theorists on perceptive and attitudinal influences to social media use in organisational communication from different time scales in order to help outline their equal influence in regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini today. As noted in the literature review and theoretical framework, social media can be traced back to pre-internet times in the 1960s as outlined by theorists such as McLuhan who saw the advent of social media long before it was officially concretised by the launch of actual social media platforms in the 1990s. Following the proliferation of these media, society today holds different perceptions and attitudes towards the use of these media for organisational communication as outlined in this literature review and theoretical framework.

The researcher proceeds to look into another theory which was promulgated following the development of more digital technologies in the workspace, the Perceived Usefulness and Ease of Use Model by Davis (1989).

2.6.2 Media Ease of use models

Davis's (1989) Perceived Usefulness and Ease of Use Model was influenced by the works of Rodner and Rothschild (1975) who noted the likelihood of an application being considered by a user if it was perceived to be easier to use. This model thus outlines how people tend to use

or not use an application to the extent they believe it will help them perform the job better further explaining how people are also likely to use or not use an application based on the effort required for that application. This could translate to present day scenarios where communications officers in regulatory authorities of Mbabane Eswatini may accept the use of social media technologies because they perceive them as being easy to use or requiring less effort.

Robey (1979) goes on to support this position emphasising how a system that does not help people to perform their jobs is not likely to be received favourably no matter how it is carefully implemented. Additionally, Beach and Mitchell (1978) together with Johnson and Payne (1985) also support the Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use Model by explaining how people make linear, compensatory, conjunctive, disjunctive decisions and make other choices on the basis of cognitive trade-off. Tornatzky and Klein (1982) concur with this outlining how compatibility, relative advantage and complexity have the most consistent significant relationships across a broad range of innovation types.

Other scholars who support Davis' (1989) Perceived Usefulness and Ease of use Model are Mitic and Kapoulas (2012) who equally cite work personnel know-how as a determinant to social media use ,whilst Silvius (2016) states how some people are resistant to social media because they not too conversant with their use in the office. However, not all scholars agree with Davis's (1989) model. Scholars such as Ajibade (2018) criticise Davis' (1989) Perceived Usefulness and Ease of Use Model as being more appropriate for individual use rather than corporate and institutional applications that require the integration of Information Technology (IT).

Ajibade (2018) additionally states how experiences and IT staff proficiency promote the use of technology in contrast to perceived ease of use or usefulness adding how technology acceptance and intention are also moderated by company rules, policies and IT guidelines. Therefore in line with Ajibade's 2018' arguments communication officers in regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini might integrate social media use in their departmental functions due to organisational policy requirements despite having negative attitudes towards these media.

This criticism of The Perceived Usefulness and Ease of Use Model by Ajibade (2018) as not being robust enough to explain users behaviours about buying, rejecting or user acceptance of technology is also supported by Hai and Alam Kazmi (2015).However, despite its limitations, Davis' (1989) Perceived Usefulness and Ease of Use model is widely used in behavioural studies as an important Technology Acceptance Model. The researcher will also use this

model to gauge whereby experiences on social media mould perceptions on their usefulness or ease of use in the communication departments of regulatory authorities in Mbabane.

Another framework that is related to this model is Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) which outlines how an individual's intention to perform a behaviour is a combination of attitude towards performing that behaviour and subjective norm. In closer context this implies that a communication officer from regulatory authority A may upload a press release on their organisational Facebook page after calculated mental considerations and inferences of their intended action from regulatory authority B as a subjective influencer.

Trafimow (2009) thus goes on to describe Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) (TRA) as one of the most extensive and influential programmes in the history of social psychology due to its extensive citation and influence. Ajibade (2018) further attributes the widespread use of the (TRA) to its simple nature, which is often regarded by multiple scholars as easy to understand but still criticises the theory as largely being valid for personal use of technology. However despite its criticism, the (TRA) remains one of the most widely applied means of measuring the degree of acceptance of technology in both personal and organisational context.

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) further extend their TRA beyond attitude and subjective norm through their development of The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB),(1980) which acknowledges subjective norm and reasoned action as well as behavioural control. In an expanded definition Ken and Fabriger (2017) say "The Theory of Planned Behaviour is determined by a combination of three factors namely attitudes toward the behaviour, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. Martin (2017) furthermore explains how one is able to understand a person's actual attitudes through this theory which factors in the element of behavioural control citing this as the reason why the theory has been more accepted by scholars in comparison to the (TRA).

Therefore, the researcher is able to analyse the attitudinal behaviour of communication officers in regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini with an additional variable which is behavioural control. Fishbein and Ajzen's the (TPB) is widely applicable to a number of users and fields which can range from healthcare, politics all the way to corporate organisations. It is also flexibly applicable to regulatory authorities which are the focus of this study.

Although widely accepted, the (TPB) is also criticised by some scholars such as Sniehotta, Presseau and Araujo-Soares (2013) who posit that the theory focuses too much on rational reasoning at the expense of unconscious influences on behaviour which are equally important. Sniehotta, Presseau and Araujo-Soares (2013) further state that, the static explanatory nature of the (TPB) does not help to understand the evidenced effects of behaviour on cognitions and

future behaviour. All the same, the (TBP) is a critical framework to understanding perceptions and attitudes and how they influence action as this study seeks to understand.

Another theory that is derived from the (TRA) Model is Davis' (1989) Technology Acceptance Model which explains the motivation of users to accept technology to three factors namely perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and attitude towards use. Scholars such as Ma (2005) describe the Technology Acceptance Model as one of the most widely used models to explain user acceptance behaviour likening the model to social psychology theories. This model which points out substantive antecedents to user acceptance can help IT managers to take more effective interventions to achieve greater technology acceptance and usage as further outlined by Ma (2005).

In context to this research, the Technology Acceptance Model will help regulatory authorities to ascertain social media assimilation in communication departments against the organisational policies put in place for its use. Venkatesh (2000) additionally describes this model as valid, parsimonious and robust given how it has been tested using different sample sizes and user groups within or across organisations.

However, despite this The Technology Acceptance Model has also been criticised by Kazmi (2015) who in turn argues that it is not robust enough to explain user behaviour about buying, rejecting or accepting to use technology. Ajabade (2018), concurs with this arguing that the model is not suitable or practically applicable to firms, companies and most organisations and suggests that the model is flawed due to its insufficient explanation of users' technological adoption especially in the context of e-Government.

Ironically E- Government is a characteristic of the regulatory authorities under this study who are typically conservative by nature therefore the unsuitability of the model for technological user acceptance in E-Government would equally translate to its unsuitability for regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini.

Another model that is similar to the Technology Acceptance Model is Rodgers' (1955) Diffusion of Innovation Theory which outlines the pace, rate and reasons for the proliferation of innovations. This behavioural change model according to Larmote (2019), explains how over time an idea or product gains momentum and spreads through a specific population or system. Larmote (2019) adds how the diffusion of that particular innovation eventually leads to the adoption of the new idea behaviour or product. Rodgers' (1955) goes on to add how the key to adoption is positive perception of the innovation thus explaining why some people are more apt to adopt innovations than others.

In explaining how an idea or product gains momentum and spreads through a specific population or system, the Diffusion of Innovations Theory classifies target populations into five adopter categories that outline different characteristics. These categories include innovators and venturesome people who are willing to be trendsetters and don't mind taking risks that result in new innovations. Another category includes early adopters who are also comfortable in embracing change opportunities as opinion leaders whilst the other category of people, the early majority has people that are rarely leaders but adopt new ideas before the average person. Rodgers' (1955) last category includes laggards who are conservative people, bound by tradition and sceptical of change. These classifications are very important in that they are equally representative of this study's research population.

Therefore, this theory helps us to categorise communication officers in regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini and equally appreciate their characteristics as defined by Rodgers's (1955) Diffusion of Innovation Theory. Additionally, the differences in their characteristics helps us to understand the contribution of predispositions and personal traits to technological acceptance in the workplace.

Rodgers (1955) additionally explains the stages through which people adopt new innovations sequentially describing them as the awareness stage, decision making stage, initial innovation use stage and continual use of the innovation stage. Whereas people go through the same stages when an innovation is introduced to them, the Diffusion of Innovation Theory outlines additional considerations that influence the adoption of new innovations. These include relative advantage, wherein a person considers embracing a particular innovation because it is seen as better than the product or programme it is replacing. Another consideration that may influence the acceptance of innovations is compatibility of the technology with ones values experiences and needs as well as triability or the ability of the innovation to be tested before use. Lastly, the Diffusion of Innovation Theory outlines the likelihood of people adopting new innovations due to their observability being the opportunity awarded to one, to assess the impact of their use.

The Diffusion of Innovation Theory is therefore highly crucial for this research as it gives an excellent representation of the research population under study and clearly outlines determining factors to the use of innovations which would be social media in the case of this study. Numerous scholars therefore cite this theory due to its successful application to different fields namely communication, agriculture, public health, criminal justice and public work as outlined by Lamorte (2019).

However, Lamorte (2019) also notes the limitations of The Diffusion of Innovation Theory and criticises it for not taking into account an individual's resources or social support to adopt the

new behaviour and innovation. Other scholars additionally criticise the Diffusions of Innovations Theory for working better with adoption of behaviours rather than cessation or prevention of behaviours, regardless of this the theory ties in well in contextual concept to the research population of this study.

In order to present a holistic outline of the thought processes that communication officers in regulatory authorities in Mbabane go through, the researcher also explored a number of dissonance theories which explain the conflicting thought processes that individuals may encounter when considering the rejection or acceptance of particular innovations in the case of this study.

2.6.3 Dissonance theories

Bem's (1965) Self Perception Theory is one such theory which propels us to look into Festinger's (1957) Cognitive Dissonance Theory in order to understand the attitude developing processes that are encountered by communication officers of regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini before making decisions to embrace or reject specific communication mediums in their departments.

Acyra, Blackwell and Sen (2018) thereby describe cognitive dissonance as the "mental discomfort that occurs after making actions that appear to be in conflict with ones starting preferences" hence they say one changes their preferences to more closely align with their actions in order to minimise this discomfort. Festinger (1957) in the Cognitive Dissonance Theory therefore adds how psychological discomfort or dissonance spurs people to reduce the discomfort they may feel from particular actions and leads to the avoidance of information which is likely to increase the dissonance.

In context to this study, communication officers who find social media inappropriate for regulatory communication within this study's research population may juggle with considerations for their integration and end up shelving prospects of their use in their departments due to the doubts and discomfort this brings them. Jones and Mills (2019) however bring about alternative accounts to the dissonance experience, citing Bem's (1965) Self Perception Theory which states that dissonance effects are not the result of motivation to reduce the psychological discomfort produced by cognitive dissonance but are due to non-motivational processes whereby persons inferred their attitudes from their behaviour and the circumstances under which their behaviour occurred.

Another alternative theory to The Cognitive Dissonance Theory as cited by Jones and Mills (2019) is Redeschi, Schlenker and Banoma's (1971) Impression Management Theory, which explains how attitudes appear to change because people want to manage impressions others have of them. As a result, The Impression Management Theory argues that, action becomes

an attempt to create a favourable impression or avoid an unfavourable impression by appearing to have attitudes that are consistent with one's behaviour. In context to this theory, communication departments in regulatory authorities are thus likely to integrate social media in order to be favourably esteemed as evolving and relevant departments that adapt to the times. This dynamic therefore adds impression management as an additional determinant to social media use.

These alternative theories that have been propagated due to experiments on specific populations are also considered in partiality by Johns and Mills (2019) who argue that the experiments carried out for these alternative theories might not have been sufficiently difficult or important to evoke much dissonance or dissonance reduction as is fully required to draw accurate conclusions.

Despite the criticism of the Cognitive Dissonance Theory and its alternative theories, Bandura (1986) agrees with its postulations in the Social Cognitive Theory stating how behaviour is influenced by the interaction between people's traits and thinking, as well as their social environment. The Social Cognitive Theory like the Cognitive Dissonance Theory analyses thought processes, perceptions, external influences and actions which are taken as a result of these influences. These behavioural theories thus help the researcher to get depth with respect to the research topic, which aims to understand the perceptions and attitudes that are held towards social media use and their influential factors.

However, despite its similarities to Festinger's (1957) Cognitive Dissonance Theory, Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory is criticised by Flammond (2009) and Myers (2010) as focusing too much on situational influences on/ to actions at the expense of people's inner traits, a limitation which these scholars believe dilutes the Social Cognitive Theory given the immense contribution of personal traits to work ethic and relationships.

This debate therefore spurs the researcher to look deeper into technological integration processes in organisations and the intricacies surrounding them by analysing Poole and Desanctis' (1994) Adaptive and Structuration Theory. Lethbridge (2003) thus describes the Adaptive Structuration Theory as the way in which technology is adopted to an organisation and how organisational structures adapt to the technology proposing a reciprocal and iterative relationship between technology and organisational structure.

In direct relation to this study Poole and Desanctis's (1994) Adaptive and Structuration Theory outlines how social media can distort the conversational boundaries in communication departments therefore affecting the set organisational structures in the same way in which the set organisational structures in communication departments can lead to the rejection or acceptance of social media technologies. These dynamics therefore add organisational

structures as additional determinants to social media use. In support of The Adaptive and Structuration Theory, Barton (1988) acknowledges the impact of technology on organisational structure by defining production technologies as competitive weapons whose implementation poses managerial problems. In light of this, the researcher therefore digs deeper to ascertain whether communication departments of regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini actually encounter the said managerial problems as a result of these modern digital technologies in the form of social media.

2.6.4 McLuhan's The Medium Is the Message Theory

Another widely cited behavioural theory is McLuhan's (1964) The Medium is The Message Theory, which explains how the form of a medium used to convey a message influences how that message will be perceived. In other words, the medium dictates the content and has more influence on people and society than the content of the message. This theory is important for this research in that it identifies the actual communication mediums used to deliver messages as equal determinants to social media acceptance or rejection due to the power they wield in determining the content shared on them. Therefore, in context with this study a message disseminated on social media will have a befitting tone for that platform and will be received according to the acceptability and popularity of the platform regardless of the importance or non- importance of the message conveyed on the platform.

This suggests that if regulated entities view social media as “unserious” and “childish” platforms, they are likely to reject the messages communicated on the platforms despite the importance of the messages shared on them. However though the option to reject these media was there at the time of the formulation of this framework, McLuhan (1964) outlined the impact of these new media then which he referred to as electrical energy that was reshaping and restructuring patterns of social interdependence and every aspect of personal life forcing people to reconsider and re-evaluate practically every action and every institution formerly taken for granted.

McLuhan (1964) however, goes on to acknowledge the complications that have equally arisen from these electrical energies or digital technologies which he describes as “extensions of men” by stating how these media are causing clashes of cataclysmic proportions as people approach these new technologies with the psychological conditioning and sensory responses of the old. In addition to this, McLuhan (1964) explains why such clashes occur citing the earlier fears that emerged due to the rise of new print technology in the late medieval art period. Such outlines therefore help us to appreciate the normalcy in the mixed perceptions and attitudes we note towards social media use in organisations today.

Condensed in the words of McLuhan (1964:8), what we are experiencing today is fear and failure in attempts to do jobs demanded by the new environment with the tools of the old “as only the adaptable shall survive”. Mehta (2002) further describes McLuhan’s The Medium is The Message Theory as not having seen man becoming a slave because of his reliance on technology but as having seen man becoming a slave because of his subconscious choices to ignore the understanding of these new media which are incumbent to his survival and prosperity. Mehta’s (2002) description could thus potentially mirror the situational positions communication officers in our research population might be finding themselves in as this research seeks to ascertain.

However, despite its seemingly direct relation to present day experiences, McLuhan’s (1964) The Medium is the Message Theory has been criticised by some scholars for claiming that men are numb to the introductions of new technologies and unable to cope with the dynamism of the technological environment yet communities themselves are dynamic. However, despite its limitations Agel (1967) acknowledges the seemingly prophetic postulations of McLuhan’s (1964) The Media is the Message Theory which were often perplexing when shared but are disturbingly clear and remarkably accurate today.

Another theory related theory to The Medium is the Message Theory is McLuhan’s (1964) Media Ecology Theory which outlines how media communication affects human perception, understanding, feeling plus value and further looks into how man’s interactions with media facilitates or impedes his chances of survival. This theory, together with The Medium Is The Message Theory are critical technological determinism theory’s that help to understand perceptive and attitudinal influences towards social media use, which are the crux of this study.

2.6.5 Bem’s Self Perception Theory

Another theory that is linked to this behavioural study is Bem’s (1965) Self Perception Theory, which states how individuals come to know their attitudes, emotions and other internal states partially by inferring them from the observations of their own overt behaviour and or circumstances in which this behaviour occurs. Bem’s (1965) theory helps to understand the philosophy of the mind and possible factors that can trigger social media use within the research population of this study.

In expansion of this, Bem (1965) states how many of the self-descriptive statements which appear to be exclusively under the control of private stimuli may in fact be partially controlled by the same accompanying public events used by training communities to infer individuals’ inner states in the first place. This therefore suggests a partial identity between self and interpersonal perception to the extent that internal cues are weak ambiguous or uninterpretable. However, despite the instrumentality of this Self Perception Theory to

understanding the philosophy of the mind there has also been widespread debate as to whether people experience attitude changes as an effort to reduce dissonance or as a result of self-perception processes.

2.6.6 The Social Media Assimilation Model to be used in this research

In view of the different ideologies held by the theorists and scholars in this study the researcher made inferences and deductions from the literature review and theoretical framework and developed a model to summarise the insights and perceptives outlined in this study. The researcher therefore developed, a Social Media Assimilation model which outlines the dynamic nature of social media which evolve faster than they can be absorbed in most cases.

a) The first Cycle of Social Media Assimilation

The Social Media Assimilation Model was developed in five cycles by the researcher starting with the first cycle which explains how social media are influenced by the people that use them, the platforms they are accessed on and the gadgets they are reached on. Therefore, the researcher suggests that, people are initially selective regarding their social media adoption levels in both their personal and business lives. Hence, in this cycle people use social media platforms that they prefer, and invest in necessary gadgets that help them to access these new media.

b) The second cycle of Social Media Assimilation

In the second cycle of the Social Media Assimilation Model the researcher outlines the increased usage of social media for business functions which is almost equivalent to the levels of social media use for personal functions. However at this level the researcher outlines how people still differentiate their personal and business social media platforms and also differentiate gadgets which they use to access these social media at home and at work respectively.

c) The third cycle of Social Media Assimilation

In the third cycle of the Social Media Assimilation Model, the researcher explains how people become more comfortable in using social media in their business functions to near obsessive levels where they feel that they cannot conduct business in the absence of these media.

Therefore, they start taking their work home and start mixing the gadgets on which they use these social media. For example, if they were accessing social media at the office on personal computers and laptops they will start accessing social media on their cellphones to do work that they have carried home with them. Additionally, in this third cycle of social media assimilation people stop differentiating the social media platforms they use where they can

use a platform like Twitter or WhatsApp to upload both business and personal content contrary to the initial cycles where social media platform use was categorised according to private or business use

d) The Fourth cycle of Social Media Assimilation

In the fourth cycle of the Social Media Assimilation Model people start using the same gadgets and the same platforms for social media use regardless of private or business function. They begin to exist in a level of “ubiquitous assimilation” where social media consumes their lives and becomes a critical part of both their business and social lives. In this cycle people choose to be consumed by social media and become obsessed with its gadgets and platforms voluntarily.

e) The Fifth cycle of Social Media Assimilation

The fifth cycle of the Social Media Assimilation model explains how, people become involuntarily consumed by social media which wholly infiltrates their private and business lives. People’s thoughts and actions become influenced and controlled by social media which transforms its platforms according to the preferences and dictates of global digital corporations who run these media networks.

At this point, social media are transfixed from handheld devices such as cellphones, laptops and tablets to compressed microchips that are embedded into human bodies. This stage highlights the power of social media that begins to consume the world and dictate actions and social trajectories. Regulatory instruments for these social media cease to be man-made policies and statutes as the world begins to be regulated by codebooks and software programmes, he who develops faster digital systems controls the world. Therefore in the researcher’s perspective, the Social Media Assimilation Model is a framework that outlines the dynamic nature of social media that evolve faster than they can be grasped wielding universal powers and dictating social norms.

2.6.7 Supporting theories to the Social Media Assimilation Model

Laswell’s (1920) Hypodermic Needle Theory is similar to the researcher’s Social Media Assimilation Model which posits that people are passive media audiences. The Hypodermic Needle Theory supports this element of passivity equating the power of the media to a direct injection into people’s brains that clouds their mental processes and leaves them unable to make informed and independent decisions.

This Hypodermic Needle Theory often referred to as the Magic Bullet theory, was exemplified to Nazi propaganda in World War 2 films that were supposedly fed to passive German audiences to absorb the messages unwittingly. Today Laswell’s (1920) Hypodermic Needle Theory is more relevant and applicable to social media use as is the case with this study.

However Laswell's Theory has been criticised for ignoring the different behavioural traits of people that lead to different responses and actions to information received.

2.6.8 Contrasting theories to the Social Media Assimilation Model

On the one hand, Katz's (1970) Uses and Gratification Theory contrasts with the researchers Social Media Assimilation Model, which highlights the passivity of social media users to evolving digital media technologies. On the other hand Katz, in the Uses and Gratifications Theory describes media users "as active agents who have control over their media consumption ".Additionally, Katz (1970) explains how new media have created avenues for users to select from leading to the discovery of new gratifications particularly with regard to social media.

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher reviewed literature from diverse scholars who addressed the research topic that was focused on perceptions and attitudes towards social media use for organisational communication. In expansion of the literature review, the researcher explored relevant theoretical models to the study. These theoretical models were arranged according to different schools of thought on three elements namely, perceptions and attitudes towards social media, determinants to their use and their levels of usage in business institutions.

This arrangement of models helped the researcher to structure the research to not only address these key areas but to also address the main objective of the research which was to ascertain the perceptions and attitudes that were held towards social media use in regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini. The next chapter outlines the research methods and methodology employed for this study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This research focuses on perceptions and attitudes towards social media use in regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini hence in this chapter the researcher outlines the research methods and methodology employed to understand these perceptions. Research methods are strategies, procedures and techniques of analysing and interpreting data as defined by Bogdan and Biklen (2007). Therefore given the exploratory nature of the study, the researcher opted for a qualitative approach which is suitable for investigative studies such as this particular one.

Such qualitative studies typically offer complete descriptions and analysis of research subjects without limiting the scope of the research and the nature of the participant's responses as outlined by Langkos (2014). Additionally qualitative studies are also appropriate for smaller samples given their depth which often enhances the researcher's scope of analysis through the detailed data they provide.

The depth and detail are acknowledged by Miles and Huberman (1994) who also describe qualitative research approaches as "definitive" and "rich" in nature. These qualitative study characteristics therefore gave the researcher confidence that their selected research approach would help to address the research problem statement which is to explore how attitudes towards social media determine their use or rejection in communication departments of regulatory authorities in Mbabane

However despite their advantages, qualitative research approaches are also known to have their limitations. For instance, they are often vigorous and time consuming resulting in them occasionally being shunned by research participants due to their characteristically "tedious nature". Moreover, they can be expensive in situations where a researcher has to travel long distances to the respondents to obtain the required data. Furthermore, research respondents are often sceptical of participating in qualitative research for fear of being identified through the definitive information they may provide in such studies. Therefore, in light of these fears, the researcher coded the collected data to protect the respondents from any identification or victimisation due to their participation in the study.

Despite the limitations that are characteristic of qualitative studies, the researcher's methodology selected the best research method that effectively aligned with the aims and objectives of the study in order to generate reliable results. This was done through the collection of the appropriate data from a relevant sample population through an effective data collection tool in the form of a questionnaire which was framed along the research questions

and aims of this study. This helped collect requisite information for the literature review, theoretical comparisons and overall data analysis in line with the objectives of the study.

3.2 Contextualisation of research objectives to the study

As outlined in section 3.1, the research methods and methodology employed are key to solving the research problem hence in this chapter, the researcher further explains how the selected methodology was appropriate to the research topic by being well contextualised and relevant in order to yield relevant evidence and arguments. The qualitative and exploratory research method was thus selected as being best suited to outline the characteristics perceptions and preferences of the study population.

Going on, the researcher further recaps the problem statement of the study, which seeks to establish how attitudes towards social media determine their use or rejection in Mbabane's regulatory authorities and further explores the source of these attitudes. This iteration of both the problem statement and the research topic influences the research methods for the study and outlines attitudes that are held towards social media use in communication departments of the regulatory authorities under study.

By so doing the researcher aims to analyse the influential factors to these perceptions and attitudes in order to understand whether they are related to cultural, educational or demographic elements amongst other factors. Additionally, the researcher seeks to evaluate the impact of these perceptions and attitudes towards social media usage within the organisations under study and understand how other scholars and theorists equally construe these perceptions and attitudes. This will help to come up with broad based solutions to the research problem.

Agee (2008) underlines the importance of research questions to a study describing them as navigational tools that can help the researcher to map possible directions and enquire about the unexpected. However, it is also important to note that these research questions are often generated in response to underlying assumptions that are often held on a particular research topic. Therefore, the researcher recapped the general assumptions that could have been held towards this research topic with the first one stating that, social media are complex to use and understand.

As a result of this assumption, the researcher was compelled to ask whether a few people use social media officially for organisational communication in regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini and establish whether this is because of the perceived complexities in using and understanding social media. In order to address this research question the researcher required in-depth information and thus decided to conduct an exploratory study to obtain this information.

3.2.1 Key research themes

As a starting point, the researcher identified so called “perceived ease of use” as an important theme from the first research question that focused on the complexity of social media use. Thereafter, the researcher explored the second research question which sought to establish whether social media use is preferred by younger communication officers. This research question outlined the potential influence of “demographics factors” to social media use in the regulatory authorities under study and thus defined the second important focal theme and research pillar of the study.

Additionally, the researcher decoded another theme which sought to establish whether social media are used in urban areas for organisational communication vis-a-vis traditional communication modes. This outlined “geographic characteristics and social predispositions” as important themes to be analysed in the study. Lastly the researcher explored whether Facebook is used for business communications in regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini.

With an understanding of the research questions and their theme inferences, the researcher explored primary data from the questionnaire to answer questions on demographics and perceptions on social media use for organisational communication. Furthermore the researcher went through secondary data sources such as e-books, journals and research papers to understand more on social predispositions and geographic factors and consequently answer the research questions.

An outline of these decoded themes therefore steered the research and informed the research methodology. Furthermore, the iterative process of revisiting the research assumptions employed right at the beginning of this chapter aligned with the views of scholars such as Creswell (2007) who outline the importance of qualitative studies with broad assumptions that are critical to qualitative inquiry. Moreover, qualitative studies raise compelling arguments about how things works in particular contexts according to Mason (2002). Therefore these considerations and the iterative process were the theoretical lens that shaped this study as described by Creswell (2007).

Additionally, these themes informed the research methodology which ascertained whether social media use for organisational communication was negatively or positively construed through an exploratory analysis to capture the perceptions and attitudes of the research participants and weigh them against the initial assumptions held before the commencement of the study.

3.3 The research design

A research design is a plan, structure and strategy of investigation developed to obtain answers to research questions and problems Kumar, (2011). Additionally, it is a blueprint wherein the researcher elaborates on their detailed plan for the research to be done as explained by Kumar (2011). Accordingly, the researcher spells out the research process and methods employed to address the research problem and starts by outlining how and why the defined research population was selected.

3.3.1 The research population

Sampling is important in research as it puts together a representative population with the relevant characteristics for a study. Polit and Hungler (1999) refer to the research population as a group of objects, subjects or members that conform to a set of specifications. Therefore, in this study the research population included officers in regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini who shared common supervisory functions within the Swati market at the time of the study.

A total of fifteen regulatory authorities were thus identified in this city by the researcher namely, Eswatini Tourism Authority (ETA), EIPA, Eswatini Communications Commission (ESCCOMM), ESERA, FSRA, EEA, The Eswatini Public Procurement Regulatory Agency (EPPRA), Construction Industry Council of Eswatini (CIC), Eswatini Football Association (EFA), Eswatini National Petroleum Company (ENPC) and The Central Bank of Eswatini (CBE).

However, within this study's population, the researcher was particularly interested in communication executives and IT officers as people whose organisational functions characteristically entail social media use. Thus, the researcher narrowed down their research population to cover these specific officers. However, despite this the research population was still too broad and wide for analysis in a single study hence the researcher had to further cut down the research population by targeting specific organisations and members within this research population. Scholars such as Asiamah, Mensah and Abayie (2017) equally agree with such processes of narrowing down research populations by outlining how researchers may face the need to draw relatively small samples from large study populations as they conduct their studies.

Such selected populations should however be able to address the research problem statement, which in this study was to explore how attitudes towards social media determine its use or rejection in communications departments of regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini.

3.3.2 The target population

In order to define the target population, the researcher randomly selected four regulatory authorities for the study namely, FSRA, EEA), EIPA and ESERA. Thereafter, the researcher obtained the names of employees who work in the communication or IT departments of the selected organisations from their organisational websites. However, not all names and designations of these targeted participants were available on their organisational websites, thus the researcher telephoned the organisations to obtain the names and designations of the officers who were not listed on the organisational websites.

However, in this selection process the researcher also noted how officers from other departments are sometimes assigned to perform communication or IT functions and therefore listed the provided names of such officers where they were alternatively supplied. These targeted participants are listed in the following table.

3.3.3 Targeted research participants

Organisation	Designation	Targeted Participant
FSRA	Head of Stakeholder and Consumer Affairs	Officer D
FSRA	Senior Stakeholder and Consumer Affairs Officer	Officer E
FSRA	Stakeholder and Consumer Affairs Officer	Officer F
FSRA	Information and Technology Officer	Officer G
EEA	Communication Officer	Officer H
EEA	Waste Department	Officer I

	Environment and Communications Manager	Officer J
EIPA	Manager Investments and Marketing	Officer K
EIPA	Manager Export and Trade Promotion	Officer L
EIPA	Marketing and Research Officer	Officer M
EIPA	Information and Technology Officer	Officer N
ESERA	Consumer and Stakeholder Affairs Manager	Officer O
ESERA	Consumer and Stakeholder Affairs Officer	Officer P
TOTAL		12

Table 1: Targeted research participants

Targeted participants of the research population were selected based on their propensity to provide the required data for the study. This aligns with scholars such as Asiamah, Mensah and Abayie (2017) who outline the importance of refining the research population in order to avoid selecting irrelevant samples. This ties in with Creswell's (2003) definition of the target population as a group of individuals or participants with specific attributes of interest and relevance. As described by these scholars such participants were strategically selected in this study totalling twelve targeted participants.

After the selection of the target population, the researcher contacted the selected regulatory authorities to confirm the availability of the targeted participants for a potential study and was informed of their availability based on the amount of their work commitments at the time of the study. Given the possible unavailability of some targeted research participants for the study, the researcher opted to further narrow down the target population in order to define a population of available participants.

3.4. Selection of the sample population

In order to narrow down the research participants, the researcher had to select an available and contextually rich sample population, one which would supply the requisite information needed for comprehensive analysis as described by Frerichs (2008). Additionally, this population was selected with considerations of its ability to provide responses that would address the main research objectives.

Furthermore, the researcher selected members who were within close proximity to enable a smooth and flexible data collection exercise. This refinement of participants to frame the accessible population of the study was done through sampling but in order to come up with the best outline of the research participants, the researcher had to select an appropriate sampling strategy for the desired results.

3.4.1 The sample strategy

The researcher selected a population which was within their reach and would meaningfully contribute to the study by providing the relevant information required to address the research questions. In that light, the researcher selected the snow ball sampling method to help define the accessible population.

3.4.2 The snowball sampling method

Snowball sampling was used in this study due to the unavailability of some of the targeted respondents for the data collection exercise, a scenario which would have hampered the researcher's effort to systematically collect data from the target population. As a result, the researcher opted for a more flexible method of data collection. Scholars such as Naderifara, Goli and Ghajale (2017) further authenticate the researcher's choice of this sampling method by describing snowball sampling as a convenience sampling method often applied when the target participants are unavailable to participate in a systematic sample. Atkinson and Flint (2001) go on to state that snowball sampling can be employed as an informal method to reach a target population where the respondents are few in number. They also add how snowball sampling can be used where some degree of trust is required to initiate contact through the referral method.

This was applicable to the target population of the research given the conservative nature of regulatory authorities who characteristically do not freely trust external parties with their internal organisational information. Therefore snow ball sampling was the most appropriate method to help select participants on a referral and “trust” basis.

Therefore, the researcher started by obtaining a list of prospective participants for the study and furthermore selected initial respondents from this target population. These initial respondents then had to recommend second respondents for participation and where third and fourth respondents were recommended per institution they were noted down as members of the accessible population until data saturation was reached.

In this study, the initial respondents that were approached were senior communication officers and executives from Stakeholder and Consumer Affairs departments and other related units within the selected regulatory authorities. These initial respondents were selected due to their strategic influence on the suggested respondents to participate in the study. Additionally, the snowball sampling method encouraged the participation of more communication officers due to its friendly referral channels that were used were the researchers primary point of contact would refer other officers to participate in the study therefore enhancing the accessible population for the study.

However, despite its strategic advantages the snowball sampling method also has its limitations. For instance the researchers may encounter initial hostility and suspicion from targeted individuals who might already be fatigued from their participation in other researches as described by Moore (1996) Furthermore, the snowball method requires previous knowledge of insiders in the target population as described by Atikson and Flint (2001)

Additionally, Atikson and Flint (2001) state that snowball sampling methods are mostly appropriate in studying the lifestyles of groups that are located outside mainstream social research despite sometimes being used on less stigmatised elite groups such as was done in this study. This sampling method also has a high risk of bias due to the small sample populations often associated with it. However, the strong population characteristics that are required for this sampling type often help neutralise its limitations as was the case in this study where the accessible population comprised of people with the appropriate contextual outlines to the research problem statement. This accessible population included people whose demographic profiles and organisational functions helped relay the perceptions and attitudes that are held towards social media use in their respective organisations.

3.4.3 The accessible population

In applying the snowball sampling method the researcher approached the senior consumer affairs officer of FSRA and invited her to participate in the study and she consented as a first

respondent. She was then asked to recommend a second respondent and she selected officer F, a junior consumer affairs officer with FSRA.

He was then approached and invited by the researcher to participate in the study to which he consented. Officer F then recommended, an IT officer at the FSRA to participate in the study. He was invited to participate in the study by the researcher to which he consented and he was asked to recommend another participant from his department for the study but he did not recommend anyone citing the unavailability of an additional person from his department to participate in the study.

With the EEA, the researcher approached the communication officer, as a first respondent and invited her to participate in the study and she consented. She was then asked to recommend a second participant for the study from her department and she cited the unavailability of an additional participant from her department. Instead she recommended an officer from the waste department whom she said was doubling up as a waste management officer and communications intern. He was invited to participate in the study and he consented. The researcher asked officer I to recommend an additional participant for the study and he cited the unavailability of an officer who handled social media in their organisation apart from him and the communication officer at that particular time.

At the EIPA the researcher approached the manager of Export and Trade Promotion, and invited him to participate in the study to which he consented. He was then asked to recommend a second participant for the study and he recommended officer M, the marketing and research officer. He was then invited to participate in the study by the researcher to which he also consented. At this point the researcher asked him to recommend another officer who handles social media at EIPA and he recommended officer N the Information and Technology officer at the time. He was then invited to participate in the study by the researcher and consented to participate. The researcher requested officer N to recommend another person from the IT department to participate in the study and he cited unavailability of an additional officer due to pressing departmental commitments.

Thereafter, the researcher approached the consumer and stakeholder affairs manager of ESERA and invited him to participate in the study. He consented and was asked to recommend a second research participant to which he recommended officer P the consumer and stakeholder affairs officer at ESERA. She was invited to participate in the study and consented and was further asked to recommend an additional participant for the study. Unfortunately she did not recommend an additional participant citing the unavailability of an additional person who handles social media in the organisation. Upon compiling the selected

members of the target population, the researcher listed them as the accessible population as indicated in the table below.

Designation	Organisation
Senior Consumer Affairs Manager	FSRA
Consumer Affairs Officer	FSRA
Information and Technology Officer	FSRA
Waste Department	EEA
Communications Officer	EEA
Marketing and Research Officer	EIPA
Manager Export and Trade Promotion	EIPA
Information and Technology Officer	EIPA
Consumer and Stakeholder Management Manager	ESERA
Consumer and Stakeholder Management Officer	ESERA
	10

Table 2: Accessible population

After defining the accessible population the researcher identified the appropriate data collection methods to address the research questions and problem statement of the study which is to explore how attitudes towards social media determine their use or rejection in communications departments of regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini.

3.5 Data collection methods

3.5.1 Secondary data collection

In order to obtain detailed information, the researcher employed both primary and secondary data collection methods for this qualitative research. However the researcher resolved to largely employ secondary data collection methods due to the numerous advantages they hold in providing depth for qualitative studies. Chivaka (2018) concurs with this by equally describing secondary data sources as one of the most effective qualitative data collection

methods. Additionally, scholars such as Bonslaugh (2007) concur by outlining additional advantages of secondary data collection methods which is their economic nature. Furthermore, Chivaka (2018) cites the broad expert perspectives and insights offered by secondary data sources as their additional advantage, whilst scholars such as Seale (2004) acknowledge the accuracy and reliability of secondary data sources such as journals which are often peer reviewed.

3.5.2 Secondary data collection techniques

The researcher analysed newspapers as secondary data sources because of their richness in current affairs and salient news on social media matters. One important news article that was analysed by the researcher was that of Swaziland Sugar Association Employee, Mpendulo Perfectionist Simelane who was dismissed for issuing “inflammatory, denigratory and insensitive” statements on a rape trial that was ongoing in neighbouring South Africa. This article which was dated 18 October 2018 in The Times of Eswatini newspaper drew the researcher to the type of conflicts that can arise from reckless social media use by employed parties. Furthermore, the article outlined how the possible overlaps between private social media time and organisational expectations may become costly. Therefore, from this newspaper article the researcher learnt how the unregulated nature of social media platforms can inculcate negative attitudes towards their use in organisational communication.

Thereafter the researcher sought to analyse additional secondary data sources such as organisational communication policies and guidelines in order to appreciate how they influenced social media use in the regulatory authorities under study but was unsuccessful in obtaining this information. This was because the sought departmental communication policies contained internal information that was not available for consumption by external parties such as the researcher. Additionally, the researcher sought to obtain individual work plans for the communication officers under study together with their work performance guidelines and could not obtain this information as it was equally described as classified internal organisational information by members of the accessible population.

Therefore, faced with these challenges, the researcher sought social media analytics of the regulatory authorities under study and was referred to their IT departments or external IT consultants for this data. However, this information could also not be obtained for two reasons, the first reason being the expiration of subscriptions to access some of the paid online analytics as stated by some IT officers approached for this data. Whilst the second reason was an inability to share the required information by the external consultants some of whom stated that they had just recently taken over from other consultants who were handling these analytics for the regulatory authorities.

Faced with these frustrations, the researcher had to be innovative in order to gather more secondary data on the institutions under study and thus opted to manually obtain this information from the publicly available social media pages. These pages provided information on the level of engagement on these platforms through frequency of posts by the regulatory authorities and the likes, shares and comments from the social media audiences. Data obtained from these secondary sources was instrumental for this qualitative research due to its depth with Facebook emerging as a popular social media platform for the study. Therefore, the researcher started by assessing the total number of posts, likes, shares and comments from the Facebook pages of the accessible population between January 2017 and December 2019.

From this data the researcher was able to analyse the type of information shared by communication officers on their organisational Facebook pages and ascertain audience responses to their posts. Such information helped the researcher to understand the level of social media use in these regulatory authorities as well as their level of engagement and audience responses received

Another social media platform that was considered for this research was Twitter, with the researcher establishing the presence of one inactive Twitter Account amongst the regulatory authorities under study whilst the other three regulatory authorities had no organisational Twitter Accounts at all. Therefore the researcher could not conduct an in-depth analysis of this social media platform given the inadequate data that was available.

From there, the researcher proceeded to analyse the YouTube channels of the regulatory authorities under study in order to appreciate the type of videos posted on their channels and their reach. This information helped the researcher to understand the types of video content shared on these regulatory channels and ascertain their perceived impact as reflected in the audience views and comments.

Additionally, the researcher analysed the Linked In profiles of the institutions under study and noted limited use of this social media platform, with only one out of the four regulatory authorities having a Linked In Account as of the time of the study. This was despite Linked In appearing as a social media handle on the websites of all these institutions. Research papers and theses from other scholars were also analysed to gain deeper knowledge on their interpretations of social media use in today's workplaces and its determinants thereof.

In summary, the secondary data sources exploited in this research provided important information for the study. However these data sources equally have their limitations. One such limitation is their affinity to provide information that does not adequately address specific

objectives and research questions given how they are not always tailored to address definitive research topics.

For example in the case of this study, whilst the researcher might seek to explore perceptions and attitudes towards social media use in organisational communication, they might not necessarily find the needed primary data through interviews and observations that might elaborate on their specific research topic.

As a result, they might have to look for the closest secondary data sources to their study and extract the contextually relevant data needed for their research topic. This might require extensive research of various journals, research papers and books before obtaining the needed data. This would therefore require patience and tactfulness in order to conduct an extensive research but tactfully keep it within the confines of the research topic.

Secondary data sources may also be obsolete and provide outdated data. Therefore in the case of this study, the researcher had to skilfully sieve the required data in order to avoid losing track of the main objectives of the research. An additional disadvantage of these data sources is their presentation of information from third parties in contrast to primary data sources which provide first-hand information from real life encounters.

In light of this, the researcher considered the additional use of primary data sources to obtain more information through interviews and questionnaires. However before proceeding to the primary data collection processes the researcher had to obtain ethical clearance and written consent before engaging with members of the accessible population.

3.5.3 Ethical clearance

Ethical clearance is important in order to outline the sensitivity of the researcher to the risks that might be posed to the respondents due to their participation in the study. It is obtained to assess the risk levels of a particular study and to outline the remedial measures that the researcher can take to help protect the participant in the case of any negative eventuality from their participation in the study.

In order to obtain ethical clearance the researcher sent an application form to the College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Review Committee at the University of South Africa stating the objectives of the research and its characteristics. Additionally the researcher spelt out the level of risk for the study and classified it as a low risk study which typically entails direct human participant involvement with minor discomfort and inconvenience. However, despite categorising it as a low risk study the researcher outlined steps that would be undertaken in the case of any harm to the research participants as a result of their involvement in the study.

These steps included a written stipulation of the willingness of the researcher to testify to their innocence.

It is important to stipulate additional measures to protect research participants as outlined by Akaranga and Makau (2016) who state how a researcher must also promise to protect any information given to them in confidence by the research participant. Akaranga and Makau (2016) further add how consent should be sought to conduct a study whilst the research participants should fully be informed of the benefits of participating in a research without exaggeration. This is supported by Kaiser (2009) who equally outlines the importance of explaining the scope of the study to the accessible population before conducting a research.

After all these considerations, the researcher also attached their academic credentials and work experience details to their ethical clearance application in order to outline their suitability and fitness to conduct the study. Following the application for ethical clearance to the College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Review Committee, the researcher received clearance on 17 September 2018 to conduct the study.

Adherence to strict ethical guidelines is important in any study where a researcher should declare any possible conflicts of interest that may compromise the authenticity of their studies to enable objectivity. As such, at the time of conducting the study the researcher was working as a full time public relations practitioner in Eswatini. The researcher was however not working at any of the regulatory authorities under study at the time of conducting the study nor had they ever been employed at any of the institutions under study. Hence the researcher had to follow the tedious channels that any objective researchers have to follow when seeking permission to conduct studies on institutions that might interest them and equally had to endure lengthy turnaround times to obtain the completed questionnaires from the research participants who were not personal acquaintances of the researcher in any way but industry players in a very broad public relations industry.

3.5.4 Obtaining consent for the study

Upon receiving ethical clearance the researcher proceeded to send request letters for permission to conduct the study to FSRA, EEA, EIPA and ESERA and attached the ethical clearance certificate to the request letters to ensure that the targeted participants were aware of the ethical considerations taken for the study. Thereafter, the researcher received written permission to proceed with the study from all four selected regulatory authorities and proceeded to hand deliver invitation letters for participation in the study through questionnaires and interviews. Consent forms were also attached to the invitation letters.

Following receipt of the research invites, members of the accessible population summoned the researcher to collect the signed consent forms in different batches.

3.5.5 Data collection process

The researcher proceeded to book individual appointments with communication officers under study with hopes of setting separate dates for the administration of the questionnaires and the interviews which had closed and open- ended questions. However, the majority of the respondents asked the researcher to drop off the questionnaires at their offices and collect them at a later date. This posed a lot of challenges for the researcher who submitted the questionnaires in 2018 only to obtain some of the completed questionnaires after a period of a year following rigorous office visits and telephone follow ups. Respondents cited hectic work schedules and research fatigue from numerous questionnaire requests from other scholars for the delay. This further hampered the researcher's efforts to conduct additional interviews.

Furthermore, the research participants expressed discomfort with interview recordings for transcription, citing fears of being directly identified and victimised within their organisations for their responses. Thereupon the researcher explained how their identities would be protected by the coding method but the research participants did not consent to the recorded interviews and hence eliminated interviews as a primary data collection method for the study.

Despite the challenges encountered on the part of the one- on-one interviews and delays in the submission of the completed questionnaires the researcher was strategically positioned in conducting this research. This was due to their previous exposure to some of the regulatory authorities under study on their job as a communications consultant. However, despite these previous chance encounters with some of the regulators, the researcher ensured a neutral mind when conducting the study to prevent bias. Additionally, the researcher was strategically positioned as they were a resident in Mbabane Eswatini at the time of the research placing them in close proximity to the accessible population.

3.5.6 Primary data collection

This research comprises of both primary and secondary data collection methods that were employed in order to obtain broad information to address the research problem statement. As part of the primary data collection methods, questionnaires were used given their definitive nature which helped to address the research questions and objectives for the study.

Questionnaires were also used in this research, due to their appropriateness for studies on people's beliefs and attitudes. Furthermore these primary data collection tools gave the researcher control thus enabling them to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data through a tactfully structured questionnaire.

Scholars such as Driscoll (2011) also note the advantages of primary data collection methods such as questionnaires which can be tailored for evolving research topics such as this topic which analyses the ever evolving digital media. Additionally, Driscoll (2011) stresses how

primary data collection methods are also highly useful in assessing representative populations for broader societal phenomena and trends.

However, despite their multiple advantages, primary data collection methods also have their limitations which include a high affinity for bias on the part of the researcher. This is highly likely in scenarios where the researcher has preconceived ideas on a research topic thereby steering the research respondents in their desired direction through leading questions during surveys or questionnaires. Primary data collection methods can also be expensive in scenarios where the researcher has to travel long distances to contact the respondents or make numerous expensive calls to obtain the required data.

Additionally, in studies such as this one where hard copy questionnaires were administered to respondents the printing costs of the questionnaires may be costly for the researcher. Furthermore, targeted organisations may decline to participate in the research where they feel that the study may expose their internal organisational information thus depriving the researcher of much needed information. Lastly primary data collection methods may be time consuming particularly where the respondent has to engage with the accessible population on a one- on-one basis between busy schedules. In that light the researcher had to be patient through the data collection exercise to enable a comprehensive study.

In order to obtain the required primary data, the researcher started by drafting the questionnaire and pre-testing the drafted questions on a colleague to ensure coherence of the questions. Thereafter, the researcher sent the drafted questionnaire to The College of Human Sciences Research and Ethics Review Committee in order for the questionnaires to be cleared for ethical sensitivity. Upon receiving clearance, the researcher printed the questionnaires and proceeded with them to the accessible population for administration on a one on one basis. However, the researcher was requested to drop off the questionnaires for collection at a later date. Upon completion the questionnaires were collected for data capturing, collation, coding and analysis.

3.6 Influence of the literature review and theoretical framework on questionnaire

Given the fact that the questionnaires were the main primary data collection method in this study, it is important for the researcher to outline the theoretical models that influenced the questions that were encapsulated in the administered questionnaires. Additionally, it is important to understand the scholars and authors whose literary works also influenced the questionnaire and the study as a whole. Therefore, the researcher recapped the concepts and ideologies that were outlined in this study's literature review before developing the questions for the questionnaire.

3.7 Structure of the questionnaire

A semi structured questionnaire was used in this research, with its first section comprising of close ended questions with multiple choice responses for selection by the respondents. In this section, the researcher obtained demographic, organisational, and educational background information of the respondents. On the other hand, the second section of the questionnaire had open-ended questions that largely captured the perceptions and attitudes that are held towards social media use by the research participants.

This structured questionnaire was highly important in providing sufficient data to address the problem statement which sought to explore how attitudes towards social media determine their use or rejection in communication departments of regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini and furthermore establish the source of such attitudes. The researcher used semi -structured questions such as the ones listed in Table 3 to get more explanatory responses from the participants for this qualitative study.

Question
Do you think Twitter is a viable social media network for regulatory authorities?
What is your opinion on commercial advert pop ups on social media?
Would you use commercial advert pop ups to communicate organisational messages?

Table 3. *Semi structured questions*

3.8 Data Analysis

Following the data collection and collation exercise the researcher carried out a data analysis of the obtained data. A descriptive approach was employed to outline the findings of the non-numerical data compiled within this study. In the exploration and analysis of this data, the researcher looked at social habits and characteristics. This was in line with Mohaja (2018) who describes qualitative research as a type of social research that collects non-numerical data to interpret meaning helping to understand social life through the study of targeted populations and places.

Additionally, it is the aim of this study to understand the social reality of the individuals under study in order to appreciate how that reality frames their perceptions and attitudes towards social media use in their organisations. This aligns with Mohaja (2018) who outlines how qualitative research helps explain or uncover how people make sense of their experiences and understand their social reality. Therefore, in analysing the findings of the data for this study the researcher gleaned the cultural and contextual descriptions of the environments within which the study populations operated in, to understand the social realities within their respective institutions. This was done by understanding the characteristics of regulatory

authorities as bureaucratic and conservative institutions that are guided by strict internal policies and external statutory instruments.

3.8.1 Data capturing process

Questionnaires were used to collect the data. Thereafter, the respondent's data was captured onto Microsoft Excel Data sheets to facilitate data analysis. Given the vast amounts of data collected, the researcher categorised the data and captured it in different columns. Thereafter, the researcher constructed six categories for the data namely (1) demographic information, (2) educational background, (3) computer proficiency, (4) organisational information, (5) social media perceptions preferences and (6) measurement analytics.

The researcher captured organisational information in the fourth Microsoft Excel column which documented, tenure in the organisation, social media use in departments, website availability, level of social media activity in the organisation, designation of social media roles, preferred social media platforms and the availability of social media and content strategies in the organisation.

Furthermore, the researcher captured information on the perceptions and preferences of the communication officers in the regulatory authorities under study as well their social media measurement habits. Sub-categories were used to collate the information which outlined similar themes. This information included the following i.e.

- Perceptions on paid social media
- Perceived advantages of social media
- Perceptions of social media for reputation management
- Types of social media campaigns held if any, as well as
- Perceptions on social media in departmental communications.

Additionally, perceptions on the viability of Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp for organisational communication were captured whilst information on the success of organisational campaigns on social media was noted in the institutions under study.

The researcher also checked the availability of Linked In in these institutions and documented reasons for not having organisational Linked In accounts where the respondents said they did not use it for organisational communication and further noted the frequency of social media updates in the institutions under study. Lastly, the researcher captured information on the respondent's awareness of social media measurement platforms in the sixth Microsoft Excel column and checked what was measured on these platforms by the communication officers that used these social media measurement metrics.

During this data capturing exercise, full and equal attention was paid to each data item to identify interesting aspects in the data that could form the basis of repeating patterns across the data as is equally described by Brown and Clarke (2006). Therefore, thematic analysis was used to identify patterns in the data.

3.8.2 Thematic analysis and coding

Given the broadness of the data captured, relevant data was identified using the thematic analysis method where data sets were narrowed down to definitive themes and sub-themes thus presenting the information in a more structured manner for analysis. The thematic analysis method was used to its relevance for this study, as an essentialist method it reports experiences meaning and the reality of participants as is described by Braun and Clarke (2006).

To meaningfully identify the social media perceptions and experiences of the research respondents, it was necessary to continually search through the data in order to find common themes and responses in the data sets. This was a rather tedious process given the huge volumes of the collected data hence to make the process easier, different data sheets were defined by colour themes in order to make the identification of unique patterns easier.

The use of thematic analysis was advantageous for this study, given its ability to highlight similarities and differences across data sets in a systematic manner as stated by Braune and Clarke (2006). However, the researcher was also aware of the limitations of the thematic data analysis used in this study which raised the likelihood of losing research context to some of the respondents accounts, given the large volumes of data that had to be processed using this data analysis method.

Therefore, the researcher had to constantly realign to the research topic which was focused on understanding perceptions and attitudes that are held towards social media use for organisational communication in regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini to avoid equally losing context of the research focus.

Given the deductive nature of the study the researcher recapped the theories and frameworks that influenced this study in order to look out for responses that had deep similarities or differences with the theories used in the study. This recapping of the theoretical framework also aligned with Grober (2016) who outlines the responsibilities of investigator's to select procedures that best meet the philosophic orientation of their studies whilst Tuckett (2005) further outlines how engagement with the literature can enhance ones analysis by sensitising them to more subtle features of their collected data.

Additionally, to maintain the right research context during the thematic analysis process for this deductive study, research questions were revisited which asked whether social media were underutilised and their use discouraged within Swati regulatory authorities and also asked whether negative perceptions of social media were responsible for their rejection or underutilisation in the institutions under study.

Referring back to the research questions helped to realign the data analysis to the research topic. Additionally, the researcher's previous knowledge and exposure to the communications field in their fulltime job as a public relations practitioner also helped during the data analysis process due to prior socialisation with the research field. This was despite the fact that they were not working for any of the regulatory authorities in question but were working in a communications industry which sparked their curiosity on how conservative niches such as regulatory authorities or government could esteem the integration of social media in their official communications. Personal experience is essential as argued by Vasmoradi and Snelgrove (2019) who state that theme development cannot work without appropriate socialisation with the data.

After recapping the literature review, theoretical framework and research questions of the study, the researcher moved to the open coding stage. Having collected primary data using the questionnaire, recurring responses were noted down of unique statements that were made by the communication officers in the second section of the questionnaire. As a result 18 unique responses were identified as outlined in Table 3.8.4. The identification of these responses was the first step in the open coding process as is similarly stated by Khandkar (2014) who describes the first step in qualitative data analysis as being that of breaking the text down to pieces for the examination of similarities and dissimilarities.

Thereafter, the researcher started searching the text for distinct key words that could have outlined underlying meanings in the responses given by the communication officers under study. These key words largely outlined important contributors to the perceptions and attitudes that were held towards social media use in the regulatory authorities analysed in this research.

Question	<i>Unique response</i>	<i>Key words</i>
Perception on viability of Twitter for regulatory communications	<p>"No it is not available ".</p> <p>"Yes it is viable but not very popular due to population size but not that vibrant in Eswatini"</p>	<p><i>availability</i></p> <p><i>popularity</i></p> <p><i>vibrancy</i></p>

	<p>“ No, not in Eswatini, it is rather elitist”</p> <p>“Yes, maybe viable only for purposes of presence but I want to go for it “</p> <p>“Yes it can help drive a real-time conversation with feedback”</p>	<p><i>elitist</i></p> <p><i>presence</i></p> <p><i>feedback</i></p>
Perceptions on viability of Facebook for organisational communication	<p>“ Yes, as long as one does not post controversial information which dilutes purpose of the post “</p> <p>“Yes, cheaper than traditional media. Everyone uses it in Eswatini “</p>	<p><i>controversial</i></p> <p><i>cheaper</i></p>
Perceptions on social media for reputation management	“No, you cannot control people’s reactions”	perceived riskiness

	<p>"It is the future, it is good for reputation management"</p> <p>"It is actually a contributor to organisational risk but can help to some degree"</p> <p>" No, it can easily drag the name of the organisation "</p> <p>"Good but risky if not well managed "</p>	<p>perceived usefulness</p> <p>perceived riskiness</p> <p>perceived riskiness</p> <p>risky</p>
Perceptions on use of commercial advert pop ups	<p>" Yes, but minimally "</p> <p>"Yes, annoying but effective when we have warnings and events "</p>	<p>controlled use</p> <p>unwarranted communication</p>
Availability of organisational Linked In Account	<p>" No there is no specific reason "</p>	<p>no reason</p>
Unpleasant organisational experience on social media	<p>" Hijackers exploit our platforms to advertise their commercial products "</p> <p>"No, respondents send very constructive comments "</p>	<p>exploitation</p> <p>positive experience</p> <p>constructive comments</p>

	“Comments from the public are approved by the administrator to prevent negative publicity “	approval negative publicity
--	---	------------------------------------

Table 4 Unique Questionnaire Responses

These keywords and underlying meanings culminated into themes that are similarly described by Vaismoradi and Snelgrove (2019) as threads of underlying meanings within similar pieces of data that can be tied together and within which the researcher may ask the question ‘why’?

- After identifying key words in the responses given by the research participants, the researcher proceeded to interpret meanings from these responses. Therefore, keywords that emerged in response to the question on the perceptions that were held on the viability of Twitter use for regulatory communications were noted. The keywords that were identified included the words:
- Availability
- Popularity
- Vibrancy
- Elitist
- Presence and
- Feedback.

Therefore, from these keywords possible determinants to social media use could be noted for example the availability, popularity and vibrancy of the said platform. Additionally, it was noted how communication officers were likely to hold negative attitudes towards using particular social media platforms if they felt as though they were elitist and further noted how feedback and “brand “ presence on a social media platform could compel communication officers to use those platforms for organisational communication due to their perceived usefulness.

The response to the question that determined the perceptions of the study population on the viability of Facebook use for organisational communication was analysed next. This question generated the following key words namely,

- Controversial
- Cheaper
- Everyone and
- Risky

These key words outlined the perceptions that were held towards social media use by the officers under study wherein the adoption or use of these social media for organisational

communication was influenced by the perceived appropriateness, affordability and riskiness of the platform. The researcher came to this conclusion having noted respondents stating that Facebook was affordable to use and was widely available although it also raised controversies in both business and personal use.

Thereafter, the researcher analysed another question that looked into the perceptions that were held towards social media use for reputation management in the institutions under study and identified keywords such as ***uncontrollability, riskiness, and future***. These keywords outlined additional determinants to the attitudes that were held towards social media use in the regulatory authorities under study wherein respondents were unlikely to use social media if they felt as though it was uncontrollable and risky to use. Additionally, the researcher identified the word “future” which brought another dynamic to the study wherein communication officers were likely to use social media if they felt as though there was a place for it in the future of organisational communication.

Furthermore, assessments were done on the perceptions that were held towards the use of commercial advert pop ups in the regulatory authorities under study and the researcher identified the words minimally and annoying as responses from the communication officers under study. These words “outlined “how excessive exposure to social media or how unwarranted social media communications could ignite negative attitudes towards these platforms.

Additionally, the researcher assessed the availability of LinkedIn and its use in the institutions under study and noted a unique response wherein one officer stated how they did not use Linked In for organisational communication in their institution for “no reason at all” in their direct words. Therefore, from this response it was noted how officers may not use a digital platform for no premeditated reason at all without the influence of societal expectations of perceptions.

Lastly, on the question of organisational social media experiences encountered by the officers under study, the researcher identified the keywords constructive comment and negative publicity in the questionnaire responses, words which pointed out experiences encountered on these social media platforms and their perceived impact on the institutions under study from a risk and usefulness perspective. Having identified keywords from these unique questionnaire responses, the researcher went on to develop themes by interpreting the underlying meanings of these keywords. Sub-themes were additionally developed from this captured primary data which helped to further explain the research topic that was focused on understanding perceptions and attitudes that were held towards social media use in the regulatory authorities under study.

In order to clearly outline the analysed data, themes and subthemes of the data were presented diagrammatically with a third column of codes being added to further describe the identified themes as indicated in Table 5. This was equally supported by Vaismoradi and Snelgrove (2019) who state how mapping and diagrams help researchers to support valid integration, interpretation and synthesis of findings.

Given the deductive nature of the study, sub-themes were deduced from the survey questions, the unique responses as well as the literature review and theoretical framework and were condensed into one table that presented the perceptions and attitudes held towards social media use by the research population in thematic form.

Theme	Subtheme	Code
Demographic factors	gender and age	100
Educational background	professional qualifications additional certifications familiarity	101
Accessibility and computer proficiency	access to pc access to tablet access to internet access to social media platforms access to social media applications and measurement platforms availability	102

Organisational experiences and roles	department tenure in organisation designation of social media roles	103
Organisational procedures and policies	content strategy availability social media strategy availability frequency in review of social media strategy budgetary allocations	104
Social media usage	activities campaigns frequency minimal use annoyance	105
Perceptions and attitudes	Perceived riskiness Perceived ease of use Perceived usefulness Elitism	106
Understanding of social media	Social media measurement and analytics	107

Social media experiences	personal organisational negative publicity	108
Social media characteristics	popularity affordability controversy dynamism presence vibrancy efficiency interractability growth potential dynamism	109
Social reality	subjective norms social expectations	

Table 5 **Coding and data analysis**

3.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher outlined the research methods methodology and data analysis for this study. The researcher also explains how they administered the questionnaire to the respondents in two formats. This included administering the questionnaire on a one on one

basis to some of the respondents whilst the other respondents opted to complete the questionnaires in the absence of the researcher and submit them at a later time.

The researcher further explains how some respondents who had the one on one questionnaire sessions shared important information with them and further referred them to their organisational social media platforms to obtain more in-depth information on their activities and audience responses. As a result the findings of this study have significant information from observations on the social media pages of the study population and equal information from questionnaire responses. In the following chapter, the researcher will lay out the research findings on perceptions and attitudes held towards social media use for organisation communication in Mbabane's regulatory authorities. These findings will be drawn from both primary and the secondary sources.

Chapter 4: PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the presented research findings are a crucial component as they help to address the research objectives, answer the research questions and address the problem statement of the study. These research findings are also an indicator of the researcher's alignment to the research context as they form an early outline of the probable research results and conclusions. Therefore in the case of this study, the researcher presented findings that outlined the perceptions and attitudes that were held towards social media use in the Mbabane Eswatini's regulatory authorities in line with the research topic. Furthermore, the researcher outlined the levels of social media use for organisational communication in these institutions in light of the perceptions and attitudes that were held towards these digital media by the respondents. Given the huge volumes of data compiled in this study the researcher started by creating a questionnaire data capturing frame to help organise the research responses in an organised format.

4.2 Data capturing and segmentation

This manner of systematically arranging the data in the early stages of research is equally supported by Patton (2002) who outlines the importance of bringing order, structure and meaning to masses of collected data at all times. De Vos *et al.*, (2005) further supports this approach by equally stressing the importance of sifting out irrelevant facts and identifying significant patterns and trends in the early stages of data capturing.

Therefore, in like manner the researcher captured the raw data obtained from the primary data collection instrument being the questionnaire onto Microsoft Excel Data sheets in a tabulated format in order to bring order and structure to the collected data. This collected data was segmented into six Microsoft Data sheets which captured broad information from the respondents starting with information on their demographic and educational backgrounds as represented in section 4.3.

4.3 Demographic information and educational background

Gender

- Males 70%
- Females 30%

Age

21-30 30%

31-40 60%

41-50 10%

Educational Qualifications

Masters 40%

Undergraduate 30%

Diploma 10%

None 20%

Additional certifications

None 80%

Marketing 10%

Web designing 10%

In compiling the demographic information of the study population, the researcher interviewed seven males and three females from four regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini, namely FSRA, EIPA, EEA and ESERA. The researcher noted how the responses to the questionnaire from the males and female respondents were similar in all the sections of the questionnaire. Therefore, this reflected how gender was not necessarily a major determinant to social media use in the organisational departments of the regulatory authorities under study.

Moreover, the researcher noted how the majority of the communication officers handling social media in their respective institutions were youthful or of middle age with 30% of the respondents aged between 21 and 30 whilst 60% of the respondents were aged between 31 and 40. This reflected how these communication officers were bound to be well acquainted with social media technologies as they came from the computer age generation. This singled out one respondent in the questionnaire who was aged between 41 and 50. Thus, given the age compositions in the survey population, the researcher noted how the “youthfulness” of the respondents could have positively influenced their attitudes towards social media for organisational communication. Additionally the respondents could have been amenable to

social media use in their business operations given their exposure to these media which are known to often appeal more to younger and middle aged people.

However, the researcher also observed the responses of the oldest respondent in the study and noted how this respondent's answers were very similar to the questionnaire responses of the rest of the sample population. This therefore dispelled the researcher's initial assumption that older people had difficulties in using social media due to their limited generational exposure, a factor that would culminate in them holding negative attitudes towards these media in formal organisations. In the case of this study, this was not the case as the unique age respondent in this research represented the crop of older people who are amenable to the adaptation of social media for official business use.

The researcher also captured the educational qualifications of the communication officers under study and noted how 80% of the respondents had tertiary qualifications in either undergraduate studies or Masters Programmes. Therefore, this reflected the advanced qualification levels of the officers who were handling social media in their departments and justified their positive responses towards social media use for official organisational communications. However, the researcher ironically noted that 20% of the sample population who did not have professional academic qualifications equally gave enlightened and positive responses towards social media use in their respective institutions.

This dynamic thereby drew the researcher to determine how societal norms and constructed realities could equally have influenced social media perceptions amongst the sample population wherein the broader societal acceptance of social media outside the workplace could have motivated the highly positive attitudes held towards social media within the study population.

In order to ascertain whether any additional factors could have contributed to the perceptions held towards social media use by the officers under study, the researcher checked whether any of the research participants had obtained any extra certifications in the course of their employment with their institutions and noted how only 20 % of these officers had enhanced their certifications in marketing and web design. This pointed to potential reasons for the future rejection of additional social media innovations within the departments of these officers given how continuous development on the job often leads to easier acceptance of new innovations.

4.4 Access to ICT's and computer proficiency

The researcher also noted how access to ICT's and computer proficiency influenced perceptions and attitudes towards social media use in the regulatory authorities under study. Access to ICT's in the case of this study referred to the ability of officers to use desktop

computers, or mobile devices such as laptops cell phones and tablets on or off the internet. Therefore, the researcher noted that 100% of the research respondents indicated that they had access to a computer and the internet whilst 40 % of the study population said they had access to tablets as more advanced mobile devices.

The researcher further noted that 70 % of the respondents understood social media as allowing for easy and fast communication whilst 30% thought it was an interactive platform. Therefore, summatively 50% of the research population acknowledged having advanced computer proficiency whilst the remaining 50% said they had average computer proficiency. These research findings obtained through the questionnaires helped the researcher to appreciate the extent to which access to ICT's and computer proficiency influenced the perceptions and attitudes that were held towards social media in the regulatory authorities under study with the high access levels to these ICT's seemingly cultivating positive attitudes towards their use for organisational communication.

Access to PC Yes 100% No 0 %
Access to the internet Yes 100% No 0%
Level of computer proficiency Advanced 50% Average 50%
Access to a tablet Yes 40% No 60%

Understanding of social media	
Easy and fast communication	70%
Interactive online platform	30%

Table 6 Access to ICT's and computer proficiency

4.5 Organisational information

Moving on, the researcher captured organisational data on the research respondents to help address the problem statement of the study which was to explore how attitudes towards social media determined their use or rejection in communication departments of the regulatory authorities under study.

Therefore, the researcher started by documenting each respondent's tenure within their organisation and noted how the longest serving officers had been with their organisation for over 6 years. Other officers had been employed between 2 to 5 years whilst the remaining officer had been employed for less than a year within their regulatory authority. This information on the employee's length of tenure was important as a potential determinant to social media use given how newly employed officers or executives are characteristically known to be more adaptable to departmental changes and innovations as compared to longer serving employees.

This is because new employees could have worked in institutions which exposed them to more advanced social media systems and in-house trainings. Additionally new employees are characteristically unlikely to be embarrassed by having to be trained on new social media systems by younger officers, a scenario which is likely to make older employees feel inferior and ill equipped for social media innovations in their departments. However, despite these dynamics the researcher noted positive attitudes towards social media use for organisational communication amongst both the long serving and newer employees.

Additionally, the researcher documented the respondent's organisational departments in order to understand how their broad departmental roles accommodated social media use. In the process, the researcher noted how six of the questionnaire respondents were from consumer affairs and communication departments and how two of the respondents were from IT departments. However, the remaining two respondents were from the trade and waste management departments in their respective organisations. This departmental information was important as it gave the researcher a chance to understand how the non-communication

officers who were assigned with social media tasks perceived social media and its use for organisational communication. For example, a non-communication officer could have perceived social media tasks as time wasting as they might not have understood the importance of merely interacting with consumers on their institutional social media pages. In contrast, trained communications officer might have held positive attitudes towards their organisational social media tasks as they might have viewed the tasks as being important for healthy interactions with consumers and external stakeholders.

The researcher also looked at how organisational policies and strategies determine social media use or rejection as they create operational climates that either promote or discourage the use of these media. These institutional policies and strategies include customer service charters, social media strategies, content strategies, IT policies, and internet policies. For example, communication officers with requisite social media guidelines and content plans can hold positive attitudes towards these media due to their clear guidelines which could translate to ease of use.

Additionally these social media policies can aid the communication officers handling these platforms with guidelines on how to handle adverse social media relations when encountered. In contrast, communication officers who do not have the requisite social media guidelines, policies and content strategies can find themselves overwhelmed by the volume of information to post on these platforms and hence became unsure of the tone or themes of messages to be uploaded on these organisational social media sites.

In institutions where employees are held accountable for internet bills, communication officers can experience negative encounters from IT officers who might single them out for excessive use of social media sites on the job whereas they could be using these sites to advance organisational communications. Therefore the researcher noted how the absence of social media policies and guidelines was a significant contributor to social media perceptions and attitudes in regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini.

Moreover, the researcher assessed the frequency in reviewing these social media strategies where they were available and noted how only 20% of the respondents acknowledged reviewing their social media strategies quarterly and annually whilst the rest of the respondents did not respond to that question citing how it was not applicable to them.

Furthermore, to assess the impact which organisational cultures and frameworks have on social media preferences the researcher also explored the levels of social media use in the regulatory authorities under study and noted how 100% of the research respondents acknowledged using social media in their departments. From there the researcher explored the availability of websites in the organisations under study and noted how 90% of the

questionnaire respondents acknowledged having organisational websites in their regulatory authorities.

These respondents further acknowledged updating their organisational websites on different intervals from daily, weekly to biannual updates. For example two officers from EIPA mentioned that they uploaded information on their websites as and when there is available information to post whilst the other officer from the same institution said they updated their website biannually. Similarly an officer from EIPA said they also updated information on their website as and when they was information to upload whilst another officer from the same institution did not respond to the question. On the other hand, another officer from FSRA said they updated information on their websites as frequently as possible whilst another officer from the ESERA said the same. However the other officer from ESERA did not answer the question on the frequency of updating organisational sites.

Additionally, the researcher moved to establish the level of social media use in the regulatory authorities under study, with seven respondents expressing their satisfaction with the levels of their organisational social media use whilst the remaining three respondents outlined how the social media use in their organisations was either neutral or not satisfactory. Therefore the researcher noted how the units of analysis which were the regulatory authorities under study in this case had satisfactory levels of social media use as outlined in their personal responses and as indicated by their organisational social media patterns.

Moving on, the researcher enquired which social media platforms were used by the sample population, with respondents outlining their use of multiple platforms which included Linked In, Facebook, WhatsApp and YouTube. From there the researcher sought to establish the specific officers who handled social media roles in their institutions and noted how communications and IT officers largely handled these social platforms even though any other designated officers could also handle the social media pages .This information compelled the researcher to explore how often these social media sites were uploaded and revealed how most of the sites were updated weekly whilst some of the sites were updated daily and quarterly.

By establishing the designated officers to handle organisational social media sites the researcher sought to determine why specific perceptions and attitudes are held towards social media use in the institutions under study given how people who are unfamiliar with specific platforms are likely to hold negative attitudes towards their use. For example a newly arrived intern might have negative attitudes towards a new social media role which is not in line with their qualifications as they might find the role to be complex and confusing given their limited exposure to social media communications.

Lastly on organisational information, the researcher established the extent to which communication departments in the regulatory authorities under study allocated social media specific budgets and noted how the institutions under study streamlined funds for paid social media campaigns from mainline communication budgets in most cases. This highlighted the absence of fixed resources for social media functions in the regulatory authorities under study, an element which potentially contributed to negative perceptions towards the use of these media in the institutions under study.

Organisational Department	
Stakeholder and consumer affairs department	50%
IT department	20%
Other	30%
Tenure in organisation	
2-5 years	70%
1-1 Year	20%
6-10 years	10%
Use of social media in organisation department	
Yes	100 %
No	0%
Website availability in the organisation	
Yes	90%
No	10%
Frequency in updating website	
Weekly	50%

<p>Quarterly 20%</p> <p>Biannually 10%</p> <p>Daily 20%</p>
<p>Level of social media activity in organisation</p> <p>Neutral 20%</p> <p>Not satisfactory 10%</p> <p>Satisfactory 50 %</p> <p>Very satisfactory 10%</p> <p>Not answered 10%</p> <p>Designation in the handling of the social media administration</p> <p>Any communication officer 40%</p> <p>IT Department 30%</p> <p>A designated officer 30 %</p>
<p>Frequency in updating social media sites</p> <p>Quarterly 20%</p> <p>Weekly 50%</p> <p>Biannually 10%</p> <p>Daily 10%</p> <p>Not answered 10 %</p>
<p>Social media platforms used in department</p> <p>Facebook 9 out of 10 respondents (90%)</p>

WhatsApp (100%) all respondents
Linked In 3 out of 10 respondents (30%)
Twitter 2 out of 10 (20%)
Availability of content strategy in department
Yes 50%
No 40%
Not answered 10%

Table 7: Organisational information

4.6 Social media perceptions and attitudes

In line with the research topic that focused on perceptions and attitudes towards social media use in regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini, the researcher captured the respondent's sentiments towards social media use in their departments in a series of open ended questions. This open-ended questioning approach was employed in order to capture the unfiltered nuances and perceptions of the sample population to social media use for organisational communications.

As a starting point to understanding these perceptions, the researcher noted the perceived advantages of social media in the institutions under study with some respondents describing social media platforms as being quick and easy for passing of information. Other respondents described social media as allowing for instant engagement to wider audiences whilst also offering platforms for cheap marketing. Furthermore, social media was described as being flexible for retraction of posts and improvement of organisational reputations by the last set of respondents for this study.

These perceived advantages of social media platforms addressed the research problem statement by outlining the perceptions that are held towards social media in the institutions under study and moving the researcher to explain how these perceptions impact on social media use. Therefore from the responses captured from the study population, the researcher observed the largely positive attitudes that were held towards social media in the institutions under study and noted how these attitudes could translate to enhanced social media use for organisational communication in the institutions under study.

Furthermore, the researcher explored the perceptions of the sampled officers to the incorporation of social media in their departmental communications and noted how all ten of the respondents perceived this integration as being highly beneficial and appropriate for organisational communication. This was noted in their responses wherein they outlined how increased social media use in their organisations would enhance flexibility in communications operations.

Furthermore, the researcher investigated organisational perceptions on the use of Twitter for official business amongst the same respondents and noted mixed reactions to its use for organisational communications. Half of the respondents perceived it as not being viable for organisational communications in these regulatory authorities whilst the other half perceived it as being inappropriate for such communications. This was outlined in some of the responses recorded on the use of Twitter for organisational communication in Eswatini wherein it was described as being unavailable, elitist or inappropriate for Eswatini by some of the respondents whilst other respondents described it as an appropriate platform for brand presence, which can drive real time conversations with increased feedback.

These divergent responses outlined how diverse perceptions towards specific social media platforms can be found within departments therefore hampering the full integration of social media in those institutions. Moreover, the researcher investigated how the communication officers in the regulatory authorities under study felt about the social media applications and commercial advert pop ups which they encountered whilst surfing the internet. These online adverts that often appear from “nowhere “when one is browsing different sites were positively construed by 80% of the officers under study due to their appeal and wide reach whilst 20% of these officers found them to be annoying and irritating when popping up in excess.

This information was important for the researcher as it outlined user perceptions and attitudes towards unwarranted online communications. Furthermore, the researcher assessed whether communication officers in regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini would ever consider using commercial advert pop ups in their departmental communications and established how nine out of ten of them were willing to use these pop ups.

Lastly, the researcher captured the sentiments of the sampled communication officers on their social media budgetary allocations in their departments with most of them expressing dissatisfaction with the limited resources available for social media in their institutions. This was highlighted by one respondent who plainly stated how the funds allocated towards social media in their department were insufficient whilst 70% of the questionnaire respondents said no funds were allocated specifically for social media in their institutions.

<p>Awareness of social media measurement platforms</p> <p>Aware 90 %</p> <p>Not aware 10%</p>
<p>Perceptions on paid social media</p> <p>Positive 90%</p> <p>Negative 10%</p>
<p>Perceived advantages of social media</p> <p>Positive 90%</p> <p>Negative 10%</p>
<p>Perceptions of social media for reputation management</p> <p>Appropriate 70%</p> <p>Inappropriate 20%</p> <p>Not answered 10%</p>
<p>Perceived riskiness of social media</p> <p>Risky 80%</p> <p>Not risky 20%</p>
<p>Opinions on use of commercial advert pop ups in organisation</p> <p>Good 70%</p> <p>Not good 20%</p> <p>Not answered 10%</p>

Perceptions on sufficiency of organisational social media budgets
Not answered 90%
It is sufficient 10%

Table 8: Social media perceptions and attitudes

4.7 Social media usage preferences

Personal convictions and preferences characteristically influence people's behaviour in and outside the workplace as personal mannerisms often spill over to the workplace and vice versa. With that in mind the, researcher investigated the social media content liked by the communication officers under study and established that the majority of them liked viewing videos, news and memes on social media. Other officers however preferred listening to music or viewing adverts though it was to a lesser extent. These personal social media usage preferences largely reflected an interest in news amongst the respondents raising the potential for them to be active in news dissemination on their organisational social media pages due to their personal biases. These officers additionally outlined how they equally liked to surf news and photos on the organisational pages of other businesses.

Another element which the researcher looked into under the social media usage preferences for the research population was the type of their preferred social media campaigns. Hence, the researcher noted that most of the respondents ran educative and informative campaigns on their social media pages. Such campaigns helped to outline the perceived usage of these social media platforms by these officers.

Additionally, the researcher sought to understand whether any strides were taken to measure the success of these campaigns and established how the majority of the research respondents used social media measurement platforms such as Facebook Insights to measure the success of their campaigns. Furthermore, Google Analytics emerged as another popular social media measurement platform for these campaigns followed by Twitter and Pinterest Analytics.

However, the researcher also noted how one respondent expressed their lack of understanding of these social media measurement analytics bringing up limited knowledge as another potential determinant for social media use or rejection in the regulatory authorities under study. The respondent who expressed this lack of knowledge was the oldest respondent in the survey and was not directly from a communications department. As a result, the researcher noted the importance of internal organisational training for social media

measurement platforms in the institutions under study in order to help enhance awareness and departmental efficiency when using these platforms.

Preferred social media content Campaigns 60% Event coverage 40%
Availability of organisational Linked In organisation Yes 40% No 60%
Success of campaigns held if any Yes 40% No 60%
Aspects measured on social media Traffic 60% Audience size 30% Consumer responsiveness 50% Reach and engagement 50%

Table 9: Social media usage preferences

4.8 Social media experiences

The researcher also captured information on the experiences of the research respondent's on social media at both personal and organisational level as indicated in Table 9 to help ascertain how their encounters influenced their overall perceptions towards social media use for organisational communication in their institutions. Therefore, the researcher noted how one respondent acknowledged encountering a negative experience on their personal social media pages through hacking, whilst nine of the other respondents said they had not encountered

any negative experiences on their personal social media pages. Thereafter, the researcher investigated the organisational social media experiences of these officers on their organisational pages and noted how five of them had not encountered any negative experiences on their organisational social media pages as expressed on the questionnaire. Four of the respondents did not answer the question, whilst one respondent acknowledged encountering a negative social media experience when their organisational social media account was hacked by advertisers.

As an additional investigation to these social media experiences, the researcher asked whether any of the officers under study had ever encountered any loss of an original password when an employee left their department without handing a password over, one of these officers responded in the affirmative. Two other officers did not respond to this question, whilst the remaining seven officers said they had never lost a social media password to an officer that left their institution. The loss of an original organisational password could have culminated in lengthy processes to get a new one translating into frustration due to this negative social media experience. Therefore, by exploring this scenario the researcher sought to qualify the extent to which social media experiences were determinants to social media use in the case of this study.

<p>Negative organisational encounter on social media, if any?</p> <p>Yes 10%</p> <p>No 90%</p>
<p>Outline of negative personal social media encounter, if any?</p> <p>Yes 40%</p> <p>No 50%</p> <p>Not answered 10%</p>
<p>Failure to access organisational data due to loss of organisational social media password</p> <p>Yes 90</p> <p>No 10%</p>

Table 10: **4.8.2 Social media experiences**

4.9 Organisational social media platforms

In order to assess whether the social media reports from the questionnaire matched the social media activities and habits on the organisational pages of the sample population. The researcher conducted a detailed assessment of the social media pages of the regulatory authorities under study. Therefore, the researcher started by assessing the Facebook pages of the institutions under study with particular focus on the type of posts on the pages as broken down in Table 11, 12, 13 and 14. This data was collected within the same time period to ensure systematic organisational analysis.

4.9.1 Type of Facebook posts

Type of posts	Number of posts
Word posts	5
Pictures	7
Posters	15
Video posts	0
1 post in vernacular	1
Total	28

Table 11: **FSRA Facebook posts January 2017-2019**

Type of posts	Number of posts
Word posts	39
Posters	14
Links	5
Image posts	60
Video posts	9
Other posts Debate topics, location pin, quotable quote, public notices, registration details, event updates	
Total	127

Table 12: **EEA Facebook posts January 2017-2019**

Type of posts	Number of posts
Word posts	3
Photos	2
Posters	5
Video posts	1
Announcements	-
Newspaper articles	-
Screenshots	7
Links	1
Mentions	1
Advert	1
Total	21

Table 13: **ESERA Facebook posts January 2017-2019**

Type of posts	Number of posts
Word posts	4
Photos	5
Posters	1
Video posts	-
Announcements	-
Newspaper articles	--
Screenshots	-
Links	1
Mentions	1
Advert	-

Peer posts	10
Tags	1
Total	23

Table 14: EIPA Facebook posts January 2017- 2019

As reflected by the data, the social media page administrator for the FSRA largely communicated organisational messages through posters and picture uploads as indicated in Table 11.

In contrast, the social media administrator for the EEA largely uploaded image posts and web posts on their organisational Facebook page whilst EIPA'S highest number of Facebook posts were peer posts from its stakeholders followed by photos. ESERA on the other hand largely posted screenshots of its newspaper articles on its Facebook page followed by word posts. Therefore, the researcher observed the diverse content uploaded on the social media pages of the institutions under study, an element that could have reflected the perceived usefulness of social media in the regulatory authorities under study as media which enabled the sharing of broad messages to social media audiences.

4.9.2 Number of Facebook posts

Between January 2017 and January 2019, the total number of Facebook posts for the FSRA were 28, whilst the EEA uploaded a total of 127 Facebook posts in the same period. Furthermore, ESERA posted 21 Facebook posts whilst EIPA posted a total of 23 Facebook posts in the same period. This data reflected similar social media activity amongst three regulatory authorities with the exception of one which uploaded five times the number of Facebook posts uploaded by the other regulators in the same period. This therefore outlined the different levels of social media activity amongst the institutions under study, a factor which could have been caused by positive perceptions of these media in the institutions that had heightened social media activity.

4.10 Facebook audience responses

Social media are interactive platforms which characteristically promote two way communication between social media audiences and page administrators. However the uses of social media platforms differ from institution to institution in scenarios where some institutions may be chiefly interested in communicating messages on these platforms whilst other institutions may mainly be interested in engaging in dialogue with the target audiences on these platforms. These target audiences included key industry stakeholders and consumers of the services offered by the institutions under study.

In other scenarios institutions maybe interested in both information sharing and audience engagement. The researcher therefore investigated the level of social media engagement between Facebook audiences and the regulatory authorities under study by documenting the shares, likes and comments received by these institutions within the same timeframe. This information is documented in the following tables.

Organisation	Posts	Likes	Shares	Comments
ESERA	12	21	1	1
EIPA	6	120	75	35
EEA	68	448	65	4
FSRA	12	74	5	2

Table 15: **Facebook activities 2017**

Organisation	Posts	Likes	Shares	Comments
EIPA	16	11 357	4	4
ESERA	14	74	5	2
EEA	83	1085	41	61
FSRA	14	74	5	2

Table 16: **Facebook activities 2018**

As highlighted in Table 15, ESERA posted 12 Facebook posts in 2017 and received 21 likes, 1 share and 1 comment for these posts. One such post was a post on the importance of using LED lights to conserve electricity, which received a comment from a social media user acknowledging the benefits of these LED lights. Another post which received many likes, was a photo collage of ESERA's annual staff Christmas party. On the other hand EIPA posted 6 posts on its organisational Facebook page in 2017 and received 120 likes, 75 shares and 35 comments. Moving on EEA uploaded 68 Facebook posts in 2017 and received 448 likes, 65 shares and 4 comments whilst FSRA uploaded 12 Facebook posts in 2017 and received 74 likes 5 shares and 2 comments. This data outlined two main elements namely the relationship between the number of posts, likes and shares on organisational social media pages and the impact of the type of content uploaded to audience responsiveness.

For 2018, the researcher noted a significant increase in the number of posts and likes for all the regulatory authorities under study whilst the number of shares and comments on these

organisational Facebook pages decreased. The researcher additionally noted a unique pattern with the EEA in both 2017 and 2018 where the institution uploaded the highest number of posts and received the highest number of shares compared to the other institutions. This information helped to potentially outline how the engagement levels on organisational social media pages influenced perceptions on social media use for official company communications. Thereafter, the researcher proceeded to analyse other social media platforms used by the institutions under study such as LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube.

4.11 YouTube

Though not as popular as Facebook, YouTube is another important social media platform used by organisations to share or disseminate organisational information in video format. Therefore the researcher assessed the organisational activities of the institutions under study on YouTube to equally gauge their level of activity and audience engagement. Table 17 outlines the activities on the YouTube channels of the sample population.

Organisation	Posts	Like	Views	Comments
EEA	5	38	2	0
FSRA	4	3	240	0
EIPA	4	1	541	0
ESERA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table 17: YouTube activity as at 01 February 2020

An outline of the YouTube data captured by the researcher on these platforms in Table 4.10.1 reflected limited activity on YouTube as evidenced by the amount of videos uploaded by the social media administrators on these channels. These ranged between 4 to 5 posts since the signing up of these organisational accounts as at 01 February 2019. One of FSRA's uploads, was a video of its annual marathon which was uploaded by its external events organiser. On the other hand, EEA uploaded a video clip from of its annual environmental awards known as the Temvelo Awards. EIPA on the other hand, had a video uploaded by an exhibitor (Hyundai) at its annual car exhibition whilst ESERA had no YouTube video uploads in 2017.

Furthermore, the researcher analysed the type of posts uploaded to these platforms and noted how they mostly comprised of peer posts. These are posts uploaded on an institution by its partner institutions or other stakeholders related to its service line. Additional examples of these peer posts that were uploaded onto the YouTube channels of the institutions under study included two separate video uploads by Eswatini Television on events that had been hosted by the FSRA namely, a capital markets indaba and high school essay competition.

These peer posts uploaded by Eswatini's main television broadcaster were the main uploads on FSRA's YouTube channel.

EIPA and EEA had a total of 4 social media uploads on their YouTube channels whilst ESERA did not have a YouTube channel as at 01 February 2020. This reflected limited interest in using YouTube by ESERA. This could have been caused by the absence of a camcorder in the institution to capture videos to upload on YouTube at the time. Additionally the researcher noted how the limited video uploads by the institutions under study translated to limited views and comments on these channels. Therefore, from this data the researcher noted how some social media platforms were more popular than the others in the institutions under study.

4.12 Linked In

Linked In is a popular social media platform for businesses and corporate executives for the creation of business- to -business or business to consumer connections at most.

On this platform, users often upload industry developments and exchange ideas on trending business matters. In light of this, the researcher sought to understand the extent to which the regulators under study used this platform. Moreover, the researcher sought to understand the levels of social media engagement on Linked In for the institutions under study.

After conducting an internet search, the researcher established how three of the regulatory authorities under study had no organisational LinkedIn accounts namely, the FSRA, ESERA, and EEA. However, EIPA had 131 followers on its LinkedIn account but no social media uploads on its organisational page. This was an interesting scenario which hinted probable interest on the part of the Linked In Audiences to engage with EIPA on its organisational Linked In page but no activity on its part.

Nevertheless, despite the limited organisational activity on Linked In for the institutions under study, the researcher noted how most employees in these institutions had active personal Linked In Accounts. Therefore, the researcher noticed how a particular social media platform can be popular for personal use and not organisational use in some quarters as was the case in in this ironic scenario. This observation reverberated "The Medium is the Message" Theory to the researcher which was referenced in the theoretical framework of this study detailing how some platforms may be socially accepted but not preferred as a mode of specific communications.

Additionally, the case of Linked In with the institutions under study could also have outlined how specific social media platforms maybe popular in one geographic region and unpopular in another. Summatively, the researcher noted how the level of social media activity in an

organisation can mirror the perceptions and attitudes that are held towards its use in that particular institution.

4.13 Conclusion

Research findings, are an integral component of a study as they are the evidence that qualifies or disqualifies previously held assumptions on a research subject matter. Additionally as stated by scholars such as Chapman (2017), research findings enhance evidence based policymaking and bridge the gap between academics and other professional researchers. The study's research findings were aimed at creating that evidence base. In this study, the researcher found how certain social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter were more popular than LinkedIn and YouTube. Additionally, the researcher noted how organisations who uploaded more social media posts received more likes and shares compared to those who had limited social media activity.

Contrary to the initially held assumptions that older people in the institutions under study would be unable to use social media and would hold negative perceptions towards these interactive media, the older participants in this study held similar perceptions to the younger participants as reflected in their questionnaire responses. Over and above this, the researcher noted how social media was largely used for organisational communication in the institutions under study. In the next chapter, the researcher will identify the influencers to social media perceptions in the institutions under study in a series of definitive themes and sub-themes

CHAPTER 5: THEMATIC ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher explored how the themes and subthemes obtained from the coding process contributed to social media use or rejection in communication departments of regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini.

5.2 Thematic analysis

The researcher looked at the different themes and sub-themes deduced from the primary data and further analysed them to see how they contributed to perceptions or attitudes towards social media use in the institutions under study.

Therefore, the researcher started by analysing how demographic factors such as gender and age contributed to perceptions and attitudes towards social media use and concluded how demographic factors were not a strong determinant to these perceptions in the case of this study. This was due to the similarity noted in the questionnaire responses from both male and female respondents as well as respondents from diverse age ranges in this study.

Thus, the researcher looked at how educational backgrounds influenced perceptions and attitudes towards social media use within the research population and noted how respondents with lower educational qualifications equally viewed social media in the same light in which it was viewed by respondents with higher educational qualifications. Additionally it was noted how the familiarity levels to social media use were equally similar within this research population.

The researcher also assessed whether accessibility and computer proficiency contributed to social media use and noted how they were significant determinants to social media used wherein officers who had easier access to personal computers and the internet held positive perceptions towards social media use for organisational communication due to easier accessibility and availability to these platforms

Furthermore, the researcher looked at whether organisational experiences and roles influenced perceptions and attitudes towards social media use and noted how they were important determinants to social media perceptions where a trained communication officer would easily interact on social media, whilst a non- communications officer could hold negative perceptions towards social media when designated to perform social media tasks at work. Additionally, it was determined how social media experiences could influence perceptions of social media use for organisational communication where a negative organisational social media encounter could inculcate negative attitudes towards social media use in a communication officer. For example if an organisational social media site was hacked under

the management of a particular communication officer, that officer could resent the platform due to the risks it posed to their job functions.

The researcher analysed the contribution of organisational policies and procedures to social media use and noted that institutions with clear social media frameworks and policies had higher levels of social media use due to the availability of defined and supportive blueprints for the use of these digital media for organisational communications.

These organisational policies and procedures included the availability of social media and IT policies plus content strategies. However it was noted how social media budgetary allocations which also fell under these policies and procedures were inadequate or not available thus contributing to negative perceptions towards social media due to limited resources. The researcher noted how 60 % of the questionnaire respondents admitted to not having social media budget allocations in their departments, a factor that potentially discouraged robust social media use by these officers.

Moreover, the researcher assessed the levels of social media use in the institutions under study and noted how social media was largely used for organisational communication through heightened activity on the Facebook pages of the regulatory authorities under study. However, despite the high levels of social media use in the institutions under study, it was noted that some communication officers in these institutions were not keen on unwarranted and excessive social media communications which they found to be annoying. This was outlined by two out of the ten questionnaire respondents who described commercial social media advert pop ups as unsolicited and often unwelcome communications.

The researcher also assessed the actual perceptions and attitudes that were held towards social media use in the institutions under study and noted how the research participants were concerned about the perceived riskiness of these platforms which they felt were controversial and could drag down names of organisations. Other respondents perceived social media as useful cheap and strategic platforms that could reach wide audiences whilst other respondents perceived social media as being easy to use without requiring high levels of computer proficiency to use them. Therefore, from these responses the researcher noted how these perceptions could influence social media use in the institutions under study.

The extent to which officers under study understood social media was analysed and it was noted how the majority of these officers understood social media use for organisational communication and its benefits. However during this analysis, it was also noted how one officer did not understand the use of social media measurement metrics to gauge the impact of the social media platforms that they used for organisational communication in their institution. The officer who did not understand social media measurement metrics was the

oldest respondent in the study who could have been unaware of these metrics due to generational factors or limited exposure to social media measurement platforms such as Google Analytics.

Another key theme identified from the primary data was that of ***social media experiences*** at both personal and organisational level. Therefore, during the data analysis it was noted that the majority of research respondents had positive organisational and personal experiences on their social media platforms, a scenario which could have translated to the evidently positive perceptions and attitudes they held towards social media use for organisational communication in their institutions. Understandably, a series of negative social media experiences for the research population, on or off the job could have translated to negative attitudes towards social media use.

The researcher also noted another important theme and determinant to social media use in the institutions under study which was the characterisation of social media by the communication officers under study. This characterisation emerged in the researchers subthemes through the following keywords:

- Popularity
- Affordability
- Dynamism
- Vibrancy
- Efficiency
- Growth potential.

These key words expressed how the research participants characterised social media as platforms for use, hence most naturally where social media were characteristically defined positively they were perceived positively by the officers under study. This was outlined by the majority of the officers who described social media as being worth it to consider for organisational communication given how it promoted flexibility for departmental communication.

Lastly, the researcher noted another set of important themes and determinants to social media use which were social reality, subjective norms and social expectations. From these themes the researcher noted how the social realities and social contexts of the officers under study influenced their perceptions towards social media use. Hence in the context of the communication officers under study, it was noted how their institutional and social environments tended to positively embrace social media use, a scenario that translated to

positive perceptions and attitudes which they largely held towards social media use in their institutions.

5.3. Contextualisation to Theoretical Framework

Having observed the themes and sub-themes of the study as determinants to social media use in the institutions under study, the researcher compared the theoretical framework for this study with the questionnaire responses to check whether the theories identified and the responses were synchronised. This was an important stage of this deductive data analysis as it helped the researcher to check whether the broad primary data obtained for this study did not lose the context with the study.

Therefore, the researcher started by revisiting Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory which states that behaviour is influenced by the interaction between people's traits and thinking as well as their social environment. This theory is linked to the sub-themes on subjective norms and social reality which were deduced from the questionnaire responses reflecting social environments that were accommodative of social media amongst the institutions under study where social media were regarded as worthwhile and flexible for organisational use.

The researcher also recapped Fishbein and Ajzen's (1980) TPB which determines three factors to behaviour namely, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control and attitudes towards the behaviour. This theory also aligned with the themes on subjective norms and social reality which were deduced from the questionnaire responses.

Furthermore, the researcher revisited Poole and Desanctis' (1990) Adaptive and Structuration Theory, which outlined how social media could distort the conversational boundaries in departments therefore affecting the set of organisational structures in these departments. This theory was in line with the theme on organisational procedures and policies which was deduced from the questionnaire responses and outlined how the absence of social media policies within companies could culminate into communication controversies and blurred social media lines in institutions. Therefore, these blurred "conversational" boundaries as described by Poole and Desanctis's (1990) could culminate into negative social media perceptions from crossed departmental lines.

Moreover, the researcher recapped Redeschi, Schlenker and Banoma's (1971) Impression Management Theory which explains how attitudes appear to change because people want to manage impressions others have of them. This theory was also in line with the questionnaire responses for this study given an expression by one respondent on Facebook being a cheap platform which "everyone" uses. The statement of the use of Facebook by everyone outlines

the impression that the respondent wants people to have of them as an “up to date” communication officer who uses modern and cheap platforms.

Furthermore the researcher contextualised Fishbein and Ajzen’s TRA (1980) to the problem statement of the study which explored how attitudes towards social media determined their use or rejection in communication departments of the institutions under study and ascertained how an individual’s intention to perform a behaviour is a combination of attitude as equally posited by Fishbein and Ajzen (1980) in The TRA. Therefore, the researcher noted how this theory was equally in line with the problem statement that informed all the questions in the questionnaire. Summatively, the researcher confirmed the alignment of the questions of this study and the responses thereof to the theoretical framework. However the researcher did not recontextualise all the theories for this research to the questionnaire as some of the theories were in line with the secondary data sources used for this study such as research papers and journals.

5.4 Descriptive data analysis

The researcher used descriptive research to pave the way for finding new facts on perceptions and attitudes that were held towards social media use for organisational communication in the regulatory authorities under study. Before conducting a descriptive analysis of the primary data from the social media pages of the regulatory authorities under study, there is a need to understand the definitions of descriptive analysis by other scholars. Muller- Rommel (2016) defines descriptive research as a form of research that aims to define a phenomena the way it is and describe social systems or relationships between events as baselines of how we think the world is.

In contrast Loeb *et al.*, (2017) considers descriptive analysis as characterising the world or phenomenon that answer questions about who, what, where, when and to what extent. After looking into definitions of descriptive analysis, the researcher gathered data relating to products, people individual’s events and situations and tabulated the data for analysis. The researcher went on to check if the analysis was still aligned to the research questions and the research topic which focused on perceptions and attitudes that are held towards social media use for organisational communication in regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini.

The recapping of the research questions also aligned with Muller- Rommel’s (2016) definition of descriptive research as being based on research questions and methodologies used throughout studies. The researcher also used descriptive analysis due to its advantages which include its high degree of objectivity and neutrality when analysing data and its flexibility for application in both qualitative and quantitative research.

However despite the many advantages of descriptive analysis the researcher was also aware of its disadvantages. These included its affinity to focus on particular groups and not extend beyond the scope of its study populations as described by Best and Kahd (2003). Additionally scholars such as Dudovsky (2016) outline how descriptive data analysis cannot test or verify research problems statistically arguing how it may reflect certain levels of bias due to the absence of statistical tests. Moreover, Dudovsky (2016) adds that descriptive studies are disadvantageous as they are often not repeatable due to their observational nature. However despite the limitations of descriptive data analysis, the researcher still opted to use this data analysis method due to its appropriateness for this study.

Hence the researcher started by tabulating at least ten social media messages from each Facebook page of the institutions under study as reflected in the following tables in order to analyse the impact that perceptions on social media had on their use in the regulatory authorities under study. Thereafter, the researcher further analysed the social media behaviours that emanated from these perceptions both from the communication officers under study and their targeted social media audiences.

Date	Post	Audience Responses
19Oct 2017	Poster on mandate of FSRA	12 likes 1 share 0 comments
14Nov 2017	Nhlangano Road show thank you note	8 likes 0 shares 0 comments
11Dec 2017	Office closure notice	2 likes 0 shares 0 comments
13Dec 2017	Festive card season's greetings	0 likes 0 shares 0 comments
05Apr 2018	Poster on financial services exhibition	3 likes 0 shares 0 comments
26Jun 2018	Registration details for FSRA marathon	3 likes 3 shares 0 comments
14Nov 2018	Notification of Siteki roadshow	12 likes 1 share 0 comments

09Oct 2018	FSRA high school competition winners pictures	6 likes 0 shares 0 comments
17Jan 2019	Did you know note on Swati insurers	0 likes 0 shares 3 comments
15Oct 2019	Public notice on money lenders and illegal activities	5 likes 5 shares 0 comments

Table 18: FSRA Facebook social media messages as at 01 January 2019

As reflected on its Facebook page between 2017 and 2019 the researcher noted how FSRA uploaded diverse types of posts on its organisational Facebook page. These ranged from public notices on money lending, notifications on upcoming roadshows, uploads on registration details for the organisations upcoming marathon and pictures of high school essay competition winners. Additionally FSRA uploaded posters on its upcoming financial services exhibitions and festive cards.

These diverse types of posts also showed the positive perceptions and attitudes held by FSRA's stakeholder and consumer affairs department that could have spurred them to communicate diverse organisational messages on their official Facebook page. This reflected positive perceptions and attitudes towards their use of social media for organisational communication. The responses that they received from their social media posts ranged between 3-12 likes, 0-3 shares and 0-3 comments for each post. Although these responses were generally low, this however indicated the presence of an audience on the front end of their social media pages to receive their communications.

Date	Post	Audience Responses
18Dec 2017	Roadshow in Lubombo region images	0 likes 0 shares 0 comments
20Dec 2017	Buhleni Clean Up campaign images	12 likes 0 shares 3 comments
21Feb 2018	Video on protecting planet earth	5 likes 0 shares 0 comments
19June 2018	Update on Temvelo Awards pictures	12 likes 0 shares 0 comments

06July 2018	Facebook status workshop update in progress plus location pin	5 likes 0 shares 0 comments
15Nov 2018	Poster congratulatory message for new minister of tourism	19 likes 0 shares 0 comments
19Nov 2018	Images of tree planting commemoration	22 likes 0 shares 3 comments
18Dec 2018	Notice of limited service during festive season	10 likes 0 shares 1 comment
02Jan 2018	Happy New Year poster	34 likes 0 shares 0 comments
10 Jan 2019	Word post plus image at an environmental conference	15 likes 0 shares 0 comments

Table 19: EEA Facebook social media messages as at 1 January 2019

On its Facebook page between 2017 and 2019, EEA uploaded New Year posters, congratulatory messages, updates on its annual environmental awards as well as updates on its roadshows in the Lubombo region. Additionally EEA uploaded images of its tree planting campaign and uploaded status updates and location pins of its workshop. Hence EEA like the other regulatory authorities under study uploaded diverse messages on its social media Facebook messages, a phenomenon that could have reflected positive perceptions towards social media use for organisational communications. In response to its diverse posts, its likes per post ranged from 0-15, its comments ranged from 0-3 per post whilst it received low shares for its Facebook posts.

However, as much as the volume of EEA's likes were not as high as EIPA's likes it had more consistent likes on its posts as compared to other regulatory authorities under study. This could have been caused by its frequent communications with social media audiences as reflected in its high number of posts as reflected in Figure 5.6.2. These high numbers of posts and response rates could have reflected positive perceptions and attitudes towards social media use for organisational communication by EEA.

Date	Post	Audience Responses
------	------	--------------------

21 Jan 2017	Peer post by an individual on what EIPA Eswatini is equivalent to in their country	85 likes 0 shares 6 comments
29 Aug 2017	International Trade Fair dates	13 likes 0 shares 0 comments
23 Sept 2017	Peer post by The Nation magazine on biggest braai event	0 likes 0 shares 0 comments
25 Sept 2017	Update from a business stakeholder on the attendance of business conference in Maputo	23 likes 0 shares 20 comments
07 Feb 2018	Call by Amalgamated Trade Union for EIPA and the Department of Labour to engage employees respectfully	34 likes 0 shares 3 comments
22 March 2018	Emmanuel Mkhwana Ntombeni Sports and Recreation Club Gratitude	0 likes 0 shares 0 comments
26 March 2018	Annual Investment Meeting tag welcoming EIPA at Taiwan Trade Event	111 320 likes 0 shares 0 comments
19 April 2018	EIPA mentioned in a boycott Umhlanga post to resolve a problem of a textile company with overdue rent	0 likes 0 comments 0 shares
28 April 2018	Peer post on relationship of EIPA CEO with employees	1 like 0 shares 0 comments
27 Sept 2018	Poster thanking all those who participated at the EITF 2018	9 likes 0 shares 0 comments

Table 20: EIPA Facebook social media messages as at 1 January 2019

As indicated in Table 20 EIPA uploaded posts on its business networking conferences and trade initiatives through its Traders Directory and also uploaded posters on its Trade Fair together with thank you notes at the end of the fair. Additionally EIPA's Facebook page was inundated with peer posts, with one such post originating from the Amalgamated Trade Union for the Department of labour on the engagement of EIPA employees whilst another peer post was from an international Taiwanese stakeholder explaining what EIPA was equivalent to in their country. EIPA was also tagged at an annual investment meeting in Taiwan on its Facebook page and was additionally mentioned in calls for a boycott for an annual cultural event.

This investment regulatory authority, just like the other regulatory authorities under study had diverse posts on its Facebook page. However despite its diverse posts, EIPA notably had a different trend on its Facebook page wherein its Facebook posts were not communicated from the top the bottom which was from EIPA to the audiences but were also communicated from the bottom to the top which was from the audiences to EIPA. This enabled broader organisational communications, a situation that could have reflected positive perceptions and attitudes by EIPA's communication department and confidence in this two -way communication model.

As noted by the researcher, the openness of EIPA's Facebook platform , could have further opened it up to more likes, shares and comments which as evidenced by its 111 320 likes on one single post in March 2018 higher than any other likes recorded by the other regulatory authorities under study. EIPA's comments on its Facebook page also ranged from 0 to 20 which was also a significant number of comments per posts whilst its shares per post ranged from 0 to 3 shares.

Date	Post	Audience Responses
09Feb 2017	Notice Tariff Review by EEC	2 Likes 0 shares 0 comments
23 Oct 2017	Newspaper screenshot electric safety	1 like 0 shares 0 comments
15 Nov 2017	Poster invitation for stakeholders to develop a connection charge framework	1 like 0 shares 0 comments
05 Feb 2018	Newspaper screenshot of complaints handling procedure	1 like 0 shares 0 comments
1 March 2018	Poster on Buhleni roadshow	3 likes 1 share 0 comments
15 March 2018	Screenshot of ESERA newspaper article on importance of switching off lights	1 like 0 shares 0 comments
18 April 2018	Congratulatory video for King Mswati III 50th birthday	5 likes 0 shares 0 comments
28 June 2018	Advert for a consultant to review tariff methodology	1 like 1 share 0 comments

02 July 2018	Word post warning for general public to keep away from power lines	2 likes 0 share 0 comments
15 Aug 2018	Photo album Sibebe George hike pictures	2 likes 1 comment

Table 21: **ESERA Facebook Social Media Messages as at 1 January 2019**

ESERA posted diverse messages on its Facebook pages between 2017 and 2019 that included important notices of tariff reviews, public hearings and public warnings on safety around electric power lines. Moreover, ESERA uploaded posts inviting stakeholders to submit connection charge frameworks together with newspaper screenshots on electric safety and complaints handling procedures.

Newspaper screenshots in this case were images of mainstream media newspaper articles. Additionally, as part of its diverse Facebook uploads it also posted photo albums of its employees at an annual George hike and additionally posted a congratulatory video message for King Mswati III's 50th birthday.

These diverse type of Facebook posts showed the different forms of messages that the ESERA Consumer and Stakeholder Affairs department utilised to communicate important organisational messages. However, their posts averaged between 1 to 2 likes, 0 to 1 comment and no shares. In analysing the data, the researcher observed how ESERA's Stakeholder and Consumer Affairs Department could have held positive perceptions and attitudes towards social media use and reflected in their diverse social media posts. However the low responses from their Facebook audiences could have discouraged this department from expanding their social media communications as indicated in their increased posting of newspaper screenshots particularly screenshots of write ups from their consumer articles in The Swazi Observer newspaper.

Following data analysis the researcher observed the following key research findings from the study

- Access to ICT's and computer proficiency contributed to positive perceptions towards social media use as 100% of the respondents in the study had access to computers and were computer proficient thus expressing positive perceptions towards the usefulness and ease of use of social media. This is in line with McLuhan's (1964) 'The Medium is the Message' Theory where McLuhan attributes technology and its availability as a determinant to attitude.
- The absence of organisational policies and guidelines such as content strategies, communication charters and social media strategies contributed to negative social

media perceptions as officers who were not guided by these policies in their departments felt vulnerable when using these technologies without clear cut guidelines.

- The limited allocation of resources for social media in communication departments contributed to negative perceptions and attitudes towards using social media for organisational communication.
- Organisational cultures and norms contributed to positive perceptions towards social media where the acceptance of social media platforms as viable organisational communication platforms culminated into positive perceptions towards their use in the communication departments of the regulatory authorities under study.
- Educational qualifications did not influence social media perceptions and attitudes as respondents in the study who did not have professional academic qualifications expressed similar perceptions to the respondents who had professional qualifications.
- Both long serving and new employees held positive attitudes towards social media use for organisational communication.
- Age was not a determinant to perceptions and attitudes towards organisational social media use as the youthful respondents within the study were flexible with social media in the same manner in which the older respondents were flexible.
- Social media was largely used in Swati urban areas though fair numbers of citizens from outlying areas also used social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook due to the high mobile phone and internet accessibility levels in the country.
- Facebook was the most popular social media platform for organisational communication in regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini. However, Twitter and YouTube were used to a lesser extent. LinkedIn was the least popular social media platform within the research population.
- The majority of the research respondents believed that increased social media use in their communication departments would enhance flexibility with their departmental operations. However other respondents expressed scepticism with respect to security and the reputational impact of social media use within their organisations.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter analysed the findings obtained from the primary and secondary data sources of the research and outlined how they contributed to perceptions and attitudes towards social media use in the regulatory authorities under study. The next chapter draws conclusions on the study outlining the perceptions and attitudes that are held towards social media use in regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini and their determinants thereof.

The next chapter also sums up the determinants for social media adoption or rejection in the study population and outlines recommendations on social media use for organisational communication within and outside the research population.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1: Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study outlining the perceptions and attitudes held by communication officers in regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini towards social media usage. Additionally the researcher spells out the determinants of these perceptions and attitudes and further qualifies the extent to which these perceptions and attitudes influenced social media use within the study population. The researcher further outlines the implications of this research on social media policy practice in communication departments the world over and concludes the study in this chapter. However to come up with a relevant conclusion, the researcher revisits the research questions and problem statement of the study.

6.2 Recapitulation of research questions and problem statement

The research problem set out for the study explored how perceptions and attitudes towards social media determine their usage/adoption or rejection as official communication channels in regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini. More specifically the research questions sought to understand whether social media are underutilised and their use discouraged within Swati regulatory authorities. Additionally, the sub-questions of the study establish the extent to which this is the case.

The first sub-question asked whether age contributes to social media usage/rejection in the regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini. Therefore, the researcher assessed the demographic findings of the study which outlined the collective ages of the communication officers handling social media in their respective institutions. In line with the assessment, it was found that a third of the respondents were youthful aged between 21 and 30, whilst 60% of the respondents were older and aged between 31 and 40, with the exception of one respondent who was aged between 41 and 50.

However, the researcher noted that the oldest respondent in the study held similar positive perceptions towards social media use for regulatory communications. This therefore, seems to dispel the initial assumption that older people held negative social media perceptions due to their limited generational exposure with the researcher concluding that age was not a major contributor to social media usage in the regulatory authorities under study.

The second sub-question ascertained whether a few people used social media for organisational communication in regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini. Therefore as established from the research findings it was noted how the respondents used social media in both their personal and organisational lives by watching news, videos and music on these platforms and running educative and informative campaigns on them. This was further

confirmed by the social media activity on the organisational social media pages under study between January 2017 and January 2019 where, EEA posted a total of 127 Facebook posts, FSRA posted 28 Facebook posts, ESERA posted 21 Facebook posts, whilst EIPA posted 23 Facebook posts within the same period. On YouTube EEA posted 5 posts, ESERA did not post anything whilst FSRA and EIPA uploaded 4 posts.

Based on this data and information on organisational social media activity the researcher noted that communication officers in regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini used social media for organisational communication to a higher extent than was initially assumed at the beginning of the study. Whereas their social media use was not necessarily intense it was significant given the typically conservative nature of the institutions under study and their geographic setting in a developing country which is slowly incorporating social media in the business sphere.

Moreover, the researcher looked into the third sub-question that sought to understand whether Facebook is used for official business in regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini and analysed the findings on the organisational Facebook pages of the institutions under-study. This was done by delving deeper into the type of posts uploaded onto these pages, hence the researcher noted that EIPA largely communicated organisational messages through posters and picture uploads on its Facebook page, whilst EEA largely uploaded image posts and web posts on its organisational Facebook page.

ESERA on the other hand mostly uploaded screenshots of its newspaper articles on its Facebook page whilst FSRA largely communicated through posters and pictures on its organisational Facebook page. Hence, from the data outline on the volume and type of posts uploaded on the Facebook pages of the institutions under study, the researcher noted how Facebook was used to a larger extent by the communication officers under study in comparison to other social media platforms such as YouTube and LinkedIn.

6.3 Determinants to social media use

6.3.1 Social media experiences

The researcher also assessed the determinants to social media use in the institutions under study, in order to draw conclusions on the extent to which they impacted social media use. Therefore the researcher analysed the experiences of the research respondents at both personal and business level to ascertain how their encounters influenced their overall perceptions towards social media use for organisational communication in their institutions. Hence as observed from the research findings 90% of the research respondents acknowledged encountering positive experiences on their personal and organisational social

media pages, a scenario which to a larger extent could have culminated in the positive social media perceptions held by the research respondents in the study.

6.3.2 Organisational departments

The researcher also analysed the findings of the organisational departments of the research respondents under study and ascertained how 60% of the respondents were from communication departments in their respective institutions whilst 40% of the respondents were not from communication departments. However, the researcher also noted how the respondents from both communication and non-communication departments were flexible with social media use for organisational communication in their institutions. Therefore, from these findings the researcher concluded how organisational departments influenced social media perceptions and attitudes in the institutions under study to a lesser extent as both the communication and non-communication officers under study were exposed to social media in both their private and organisational lives.

6.3.3 Organisational policies and strategies

The researcher also looked at how organisational policies and strategies determined social media use or rejection in the institutions under study as per the findings obtained from the study and ascertained how social media policies and guidelines were contributors to social media perceptions and attitudes in regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini. These conclusions were drawn from the research findings which outlined how the absence of social media and content policies increased the likelihood of lawsuits for inappropriate social media use in the institutions under study, potentially discouraging extensive social media use in the institutions under study.

However, organisational policies and strategies determined social media usage in the institutions under study to a lesser extent within the research population given how the officers under study still exploited social media for organisational communication despite having limited social media policies and strategies to guide them.

6.3.4. Tenure in organisation and designation of roles

As outlined in the research findings, 10 % of the respondents had been in their organisations for 6 to 10 years, 70 % had been with their organisations for 2 to 5 years whilst 20 % had been with their organisations for less than a year. However the differences in the organisational tenure influenced the respondent's social media perceptions and levels of social media usage to a lesser extent as concluded by the researcher.

With respect to organisational roles and designation of departments, 50% of the respondents were from the stakeholder and consumer affairs department, 20 % were from the IT department whilst 30 % of the respondents were from other departments. Therefore as

outlined in these findings the researcher concluded how the respondents organisational roles and designation of roles influenced perceptions and social media usage to a lesser extent in this study as non-communication officers had the same levels of social media usage as non-communication officers from other departments.

6.3.5 Availability of organisational social media budgets

With respect to organisational determinants to social media use, the researcher assessed the extent to which resources influenced social media use in the institutions under study and noted how 90 % of the respondents did not respond to this research question on the availability of social media budgets in their institutions. This therefore implied that the respondents did not have social media budgets or were uncomfortable in outlining their organisational budgetary issues in the study. However, the researcher noted how the question of social media resources determined the levels of social media use in this study to a lesser extent as the communication officer under study still used the available free social media platforms for organisational communication as outlined in the research findings.

6.3.6 Accessibility and computer proficiency

Accessibility and computer proficiency were analysed as determinants to social media usage with an analysis on access to personal computer, access to tablets, access to the internet, access to social media applications and measurement platforms. Therefore, as obtained from the research findings all the research respondents were computer proficient and had access to basic ICT's such as personal computers, smart phones and laptops. Therefore, as indicated by these findings, accessibility and computer proficiency were determinants to social media use to a larger extent given the positive perceptions that were held by the research respondents towards these digital technologies.

6.3.7 Demographic factors and educational background

Demographic factors were assessed as determinants to social media usage with the research findings outlining how 70 % of the respondents were male whilst 30 % were female. 60% of these respondents were aged between 31 to 40, 30 % were aged between 21 to 30 whilst 10% were aged between 41 to 50 as outlined by the research findings. However, despite the different genders and age groups of the respondents their perceptions, attitudes and levels of social media usage were similar. Therefore, the researcher concluded that age was a determinant to social media use to a lesser extent in the case of this study.

The researcher furthermore assessed the educational backgrounds of the respondents of this study as outlined in the research findings of this study and noted how 40% of the respondents had a Master's degree, 30% had an undergraduate qualification and 10% had a diploma whilst 20% had no professional qualifications. Of these respondents 20% had additional

certifications in marketing and web designing whilst the rest had no additional certifications. However the researcher did not note any major distinctions in the social media perceptions and attitudes held towards social media by this research population despite their different educational qualifications as most of the respondents perceived social media use for organisational communication positively.

Therefore in view of these outlines, the researcher concluded that age and educational backgrounds determined social media usage for organisational communication to a lesser extent in the case of this study. However from another perspective the standard educational qualifications of the research respondents could have influenced their adaptability to social media as new platforms in their organisational departments.

6.3.8 Social reality

The researcher also assessed the extent to which social reality i.e. the surrounding customs predispositions and beliefs framed the levels of social media usage in the institutions under study as per the research findings with particular focus on subjective norms and social expectations. Therefore, on the part of this study the researcher noted how social media was embraced as a norm for both private and organisational use in the respondent's societal contexts. Hence from this the researcher noted how social reality contributed to social media usage to a large extent as the societal acceptance of social media technologies positively promoted their use in the institutions under study.

6.3.9 Social media characteristics, perceptions and attitudes

Characteristics of a communication platform can determine the levels of its use in an institution. Therefore, as obtained from the research findings, social media was described as controversial, risky, popular, efficient, affordable and easy to use by the respondents of this study. Its descriptions outlined the inferred characteristics and the attitudes held towards social media by the study population on the basis of its perceived riskiness, perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness. Hence the researcher concluded how social media characteristics, perceptions and attitudes influenced the levels of social media use in the regulatory authorities under study to a large extent as people were likely to use social media platforms if they perceived them positively.

6.4 Similarities and differences of findings with other studies and models

After assessing the determinants to social media use in the institutions under study, the researcher compared the findings of this study with those of other scholars along the same lines to ascertain whether the research largely aligned or contrasted with their arguments and postulations.

Therefore, the researcher compared McLuhan's (1964) New Media Theory to the findings of this study and concurred with McLuhan (1964) who outlines how new media are not just mechanical gimmicks for creating words of illusion but are new languages with new unique powers of expression. This was confirmed by the use of social media by regulatory authorities due to its unique powers of expression in scenarios where it could have shunned by these "conservative institutions.

The findings of the study also concurred with McLuhan's (1964) The Media is the Message Theory which outlines how the form of a medium used to convey a message influences how that message will be perceived. This postulation aligned with the perceptions of the research respondents on selected social media platforms such as Twitter, which they described as being elitist and inappropriate for use in Eswatini hence their limited use in this study. Additionally the researcher concurred with Davis's (1989) Perceived Usefulness and Ease of Use Model which outlined the likelihood of an application being considered by a user if it is perceived as being easier to use. This was confirmed by the study population's considerable use of social media due to its perceived usefulness.

The findings of this study also concurred with Davis' (1989) Technology Acceptance Model which equally explains the motivation of users to accept technology due to three factors namely Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use and Attitudes towards use, as was equally noted in the conclusions drawn in this study. Additionally, the findings of this research align with Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) TRA which outlines how an individual's intention to perform a behaviour is a combination of attitudes towards performing that behaviour and subjective norm, elements confirmed by the respondents in this study who considerably use social media due to the "normalisation" and acceptance of these media in Swati institutional contexts. Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) TRA additionally concurs with Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory which states that behaviour is influenced by interactions between peoples traits and thinking as well as their social environment. Therefore these two theories equally tie in with the findings of this study.

However, not all theoretical frameworks by other scholars align with this study with one such theory being Festinger's (1957) Cognitive Dissonance Theory. This theory explains how psychological discomfort or dissonance spurs people to reduce the discomfort they may feel from particular lessons leading to the avoidance of information which may lead to this dissonance. However this postulation does not align with the findings of this study which outlines how the officers under study considerably exploited social media for organisational communication despite equally perceiving it as risky and controversial. Despite this contrast

the researcher outlines how this study was aligned to the theories of other scholars to a larger extent.

In spite of the broad findings drawn from this study which were enabled by a robust data collection exercise, the researcher also outlines the limitations of the study in order to relay additional factors that could have also influenced the findings of the study.

6.5. Limitations of the study

The first limitation for this study was the restriction of the primary data collection process to questionnaires owing to the discomfort expressed by the respondents in participating in one - on-one recorded interviews or (face-to face recorded interviews); as a result this limited the primary data obtained during the study. The second limitation was the small size of the research population, which also reduced the quantity of the primary data collected during this study.

The researcher was also unable to obtain departmental work plans, reports, and strategic plans as initially desired since some of the reports had confidential information as outlined by the institutions under study. This narrowed the primary obtained for the study, as a result the researcher had to compensate for the limited primary data by obtaining as much secondary data as possible from the front end of the social media pages of the institutions under study. Another limitation was the snow ball sampling method that was used in this study .its referral system had a high risk of bias due to the likelihood of the favourite participants of the referee being lined up to participate in the study thus raising the likelihood of biased responses.

6.6 Implications of the study

Exploratory studies by nature are beneficial in that they help to solve problems on specific subjects and spell out recommendations and solutions to these problems. This according to McKee (2004) is done through the provision of evidence to increase knowledge, advance professional practice and inform policy making as was done in the case of this study. Hardinova and Peters (2010) go on to definitively outline the importance of social media research in addressing wrong assumptions on social media use and outlines the influence of social media perceptions on departmental strategies and external organisational communications.

Therefore by understanding the perceptions held on social media use for organisational communication, institutions will become better placed to develop best practice policies for digital communications. Furthermore, enhanced understanding of the experiences and perceived risks of using these platforms will help address the cons of their use and inform effective social media policies and guidelines in supervisory institutions.

This research will also help to maintain a fine balance between users of these social media platforms and the impact of their communications on these platforms given a clearer understanding of the responses to the messages communicated on these platforms as outlined in the secondary data obtained during this study. Additionally the enhanced understanding of these digital media is earmarked to improve service delivery through best practice use of social media in the communication departments of regulatory authorities within and outside the scope of this study.

The exploratory nature of this study and its broad findings will also help to underscore the importance of monitoring and evaluation in communication departments of supervisory institutions in order to understand the impact of perceptions on departmental performance and the fulfilment of regulatory mandates. Studies like these will also help to assess the trajectory that digital media are likely to take in relation to the perceptive and usage levels of these platforms given the seemingly “ubiquitous” nature of social media. This is equally acknowledged by Hardinova and Peters (2010) who state how governments at all levels are equally starting to put more into figuring out social media tools and shifting communication patterns. Therefore this study will pave way for communication officers to periodically explore perceptions on new media to help address the perceived limitations of these media before fully integrating them into their departmental functions.

6.7 Recommendations

Having appreciated the full impact of using social media for organisational communication, the researcher developed recommendations for the communication officers within the research population and outside the research population regarding their use of social media in the workplace. Therefore, the researcher started by recommending the enhanced use of social media measurement analytics in regulatory authorities to gauge the impact of the social media messages communicated on these platforms. This will help to maintain an understanding of the perceptions held by communication officers when posting organisational messages on these platforms and additionally help to gauge the response rates of the targeted social media audiences for these messages. A clear understanding of these perceptions from either side will subsequently result in improved social media messages which will yield their intended social media goals with the targeted audiences.

Following this study on perceptions and attitudes that are held towards social media use in organisational communication, the researcher also recommends social media specific training in communication departments of regulatory authorities to promote expert communications on these platforms. This will help to inculcate positive attitudes towards the use of the “ubiquitous” media, which are seemingly shaping the present and future of business to business as well

as business-to-consumer communications. Additionally, this training will help enlighten communication officers from older generations who are not fully acquainted with social media use to integrate these media into their departmental operations where applicable.

In view of the -ever evolving nature of social media, this research also recommends the attainment of additional social media certifications with external institutions for communication officers handling social media accounts in the view of the continuous evolution of these platforms. The synchronisation of both private and digital systems will be the Internet of Things (IOT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) which also raises the need for these additional certifications in order for these communication officers to stay relevant with their social media skills in the present and the future.

The researcher also recommends information exchanges with other institutions through workshops or seminars where communication officers from other institutions share best practice uses and encounters on their social media platforms. This sharing of user experiences on these media will broaden the appreciation of these platforms by the communication officers that use them and influence perceptions and attitudes that may be held towards the use of these media.

In light of the observations made in this survey, the researcher also recommends the delegation of social media tasks to support staff such as interns when the communication officers are overwhelmed by departmental work to prevent them from developing negative social media attitudes due to the demanding work load on these busy platforms which can overwhelm them in some instances. The distribution of tasks also helps to promote creativity on these social platforms when a person with more hands on their time handles the organisational social media pages. In situations where non -communication staff handle these social media pages it would therefore be important to have concise guidelines on what to post therefore, the researcher recommends the development of definitive social media strategies that have concise content plans and calendars to guide whoever would upload posts on these social media pages on what to post and when to post the organisational messages.

Additionally the researcher recommends the development of these social media strategies in line with organisational strategic plans and strategic goals to enable the fulfilment of the overarching organisational strategic goals. This will help to inculcate positive attitudes towards the use of social media for organisational communication based on the results they would yield for the institutions using them. Based on inferences made from the study, the researcher also recommends the allocation of social media budgets in regulatory authorities to enable the enhanced reach of social media pages through boosted posts. Sufficient social media budgets would also help to improve the format of the posted organisational messages by enabling the

hiring of external consultants to expertly design the social media posters and banners before they are uploaded to make them visually appealing. This would enhance the responsiveness of the targeted social media audiences to these posts. Additionally this would enhance user satisfaction within the communication officers handling these platforms and develop positive attitudes towards the use of social media for organisational communication.

The researcher also recommends the development of social media reports detailing the work done and the progress made on these platforms. This will help with monitoring and evaluation on the progress being made on these platforms to enable departmental efficiency. Appropriate monitoring and evaluation would clarify the impact of these platforms and dispel any misconceptions towards the use of social media for organisational communication.

The researcher also recommends the development of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) on social media in communication departments and the synchronisation of these with human resources processes where the attainment of a defined percentage on social media performance indicators which translate to extra remuneration. Such incentives would help inculcate positive attitudes towards social media use in the workplace. Lastly, in order to dispel fears on the use of these media for organisational communication in the wake of the risks associated with their use, legal departments should help to develop social media policies with clauses that also protect the employees using these platforms for official duties.

6.8 Summative outline

This study was conducted on four regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini to establish the perceptions and attitudes that are held towards social media use for organisational communication in these institutions. Following a thorough analysis the researcher noted positive perceptions towards social media use within the study population to a large extent. This was outlined in the questionnaire responses from the survey participants who underlined their perceptions of social media as being cheap, easy to use, popular and efficient. However a few responses from survey participants reflected negative attitudes towards social media use to a lesser extent as outlined in the responses of a few communication officers who perceived and described social media as being controversial and risky to organisational reputations.

The researcher also established high levels of social media usage for organisational communication to a larger extent in the institutions under study. This was noted in the social media activity on the regulatory under study on their social media pages. However variations were noted in the social media content uploaded on their institutional social media pages in terms of the actual format of content uploaded on these pages where some preferred communicating their messages through posters, web posts and through images on social

media. Summartively as noted in this study, communication officers in regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini hold positive perceptions towards social media use for organisational communication and foresee a future with enhanced social media use in their communication departments.

6.9 Conclusion

The researcher noted how organisational culture largely influenced perceptions and attitudes towards social media use and recommended the development of clear cut organisational policies and guidelines that can support communication officers seeking to use social media for organisational communication. This chapter also addressed the assumptions that were held on the research topic at the beginning of the study and drew conclusions on the research findings in line with the problem statement and the research objectives.

The researcher also highlighted the limitations of the study and shared recommendations on the use of social media for organisational communication within the study population and in alternate institutions outside the study population. Conclusively the researcher outlined the positive perceptions that were held towards social media use in regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini as established in the study. The researcher hopes that these findings will stimulate more studies in the future to understand the influence of perceptions and attitudes towards social media use in an ever- evolving world that continues to incorporate new media for both personal and organisational use.

Sources consulted

Ajibade, P.2018. Technology Acceptance Model Limitations and Criticisms: Exploring the Practical and Use in Technology-related Studies, Mixed Method and Qualitative researches. *Library Philosophy and Practice*. Research paper. Durban: University of Kwazulu Natal.

Akaka, M.A. & Alden D.L. 2010. Global Brand Position and Perceptions. International Advertising and Global Consumer Culture. *International Journal of Advertising and Global Consumer Culture*, 29(1): 37- 56.

Akaranga, S.I and Makau, B.K. 2016. Ethical considerations and their applications to research: A case of University of Nairobi, *Journal of Educational Policy and Entrepreneurial Research*, 3 (12):1-9.

Akumu, P.2018.Uganda Introduces Social Media Tax Despite Criticism. Retrieved from:<https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2018/7/Uganda-introduces-social-media-tax-despite-criticism> (Accessed 1 July 2018).

Alsaadi, H. 2014. *Demystifying Ontology and Epistemology in Research Methods*. Sheffield: University of Sheffield.

Al-Suqri, M.N. and Al- Auqi, A.S. 2015.*Information Seeking Behaviour and Technology Adoption: Theories and Trends*. Muscat: IGI Global.

Andrews, K.A. 2017. and Hemphill, M. 2017. A Practical Guide to Collaborative, Qualitative Data Analysis. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 37 (2):225-231.

Appel, G. Grewal, L. Hadi, R. and Stephen, A.T. 2019. The Future of Social Media in Marketing. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 48(1):79-95.

Asiamah, N. Mensah, H.K. and Oteng Abayie, E.F. 2017. General Target and Accessible Population: Demystifying the Concepts for Effective Sampling.*The Qualitative Report*, 22(6):607-621.

Bajracharya, S. 2018. Democratic –Participant Theory of Mass Communication. Retrieved from www.businessstopia.net/mass-communication/democratic-participant-theory-mass-communication. (Accessed on 21 September 2019).

Bakar, AN. & Ambali A.R. 2014. *ICT Adoption and Application in the Malaysian Public Sector*. Mara: GI Global Malaysia 6: 82-85.

Bandura, A. 1989 Social Cognitive Theory in R. Vasta (Ed.) *Annals of Child Development Six Theories of Child development*. California: Stanford University Press.

- Barnajee, A. and Chaudhury, S. 2010. Statistics without tears: Inputs for sample size calculations, *Industrial psychiatry*, 19 (1):60 -65.
- Baskarada, S. 2014. Qualitative Case Study Guidelines, *The Qualitative Report*, 19 (40):1-18.
- Benson, V. and Morgan, S, 2015. *Implications of Social Media Use in Personal and Professional settings*. California: Sage.
- Bertini, M. 2006. *Indirect Effects of Marketing Decisions on Consumer Response*. Boston: Harvard University Press.
- Bonslaugh, S. 2007. *Secondary Data Sources for Public Health: A Practical Guide to Biostatistics and Epidemiology*, 1st ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Braun, V and Clarke, V. 2006. Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3 (2): 77-101.
- Brannon, V.C. 2019. *Free Speech and the Regulation of Social media content*. Congressional ad Research Service Paper. Washington. DC.: Congressional Research Service press.
- Bryman, A.2008. *Social Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Campbell, D.T. 1988. *Methodology and Epistemology for Social Sciences*. Chicago.IL: University of Chicago Press. (Accessed 6 May 2020).
- Carr, N. 2018. Why Trump Tweets (and Why We Listen). Retrieved from: www.politico.com. Jan 2018.
- Castells, M. 2011. A Network Theory of Power. *International Journal of Communication*, 11 (5):773-787.
- Chaiklin, H. 2011. Attitudes Behaviour and Social Practice, *The Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 38(1): 31-49.
- Crano, W.D. and Proslin, R. 2006. Attitudes and Persuasion. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 57(1):345-374.
- Creswell, J.W. 2003. *Research design: Qualitative Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* 2nd edition. California: Sage.
- Crotty M. 1998. *The Foundations of Social Research Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process*. California: Sage.

- Chen, D. Jiang, Y. and Lai, F. 2010. Technological Personal Environmental Framework: A conceptual model for technology acceptance at individual level. *Journal of International Technology and Information Management*, 19 (3): 243.
- Chivaka, R. 2018. Secondary Data Analysis as one of the Most Effective Qualitative Techniques. Sunderland: University of Sunderland.
- Chung, J. 2001. The challenge of Diversity in Global Organisations: Retrieved from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/073b/4e3b52ec91005bb6ff712dee924ab96ebc35.pdf-83> (Accessed on 28 August 2017).
- Davis, F. D. 1989 Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use and User Acceptance of Information Technology. *MIS Quarterly*, 13 (3) :319-340.
- Davis, F.D. Bagozzi R.P and Warshaw, P.R. 1989. User Acceptance of Computer Technology: Comparison of Two Theoretical Models. *Management Science*, (35) 8: 982-1003.
- Dockery, T.M. And Boldeian.AG. 1989. Attitude versus Actions: Lapiere's 1934 Classic Study Revisited. *Social Behaviour and Personality: An International Journal*, 17 (1):9-16.
- Eldor, K. 2011. Why Every Company Needs a Workplace Social Media Policy. Portslade: Monster Worldwide Canada.
- Fam, K.S. Waller, D.S and Erdogan, B.Z. 2004. The influence of Religion on Attitudes towards the Advertising of Controversial Products. *European Journal of Marketing*, 36 (5/6): 537-555.
- Flamand, L. 2009. Critique of Social Cognitive Theory Retrieved from http://www.ehow.com/about_5402665_critique_social_cognitive_theory.html. (Accessed on 28 February 2020).
- Gangi, P.M. and Wasko, M.M. 2016. Social Media Engagement Theory: Exploring the influence of user engagement of social media usage. *Journal of Organisational and End User computing*, 28 (2):53-73.
- Gelleman, M.D. & Turner, J.R. 2013. Encyclopaedia of Behavioural Medicine. New York, NY.: Springer Verlag.
- Goldstein, N.J. & Cialdini, R.B. 2007. The Spyglass Self: A Model of vicarious Self-perception. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92(3): 402-417.
- Green, L.W. 2009 *Diffusion Theory and Knowledge Dissemination Utilisation and Integration in Public Health Annual Review of Public Health*, 30 (1):151-174. (Accessed on 16 October 2020).

Gross, J. 2011. The Medium is the Message Communication, User Experience, and Web Design Indiana USA: <https://www.smashingmagazine.com/2011/07/the-medium-is-the-message>. (Accessed on 28 August 2017).

Hern, Alex and David Pegg, 2018. 'Facebook Fined for Data Breaches in Cambridge Analytica Scandal' *The Guardian* 10 July 2018. <https://www.google.com.amp/s/amp.theguardian.com/technology/2018/jul/11/facebook-fined-for-data-breaches-in-cambridge-analytica-scandal> Accessed on 28 August 2020.

Holmes, R. Dahan, H.M. Ashari, H and Jaya, P. 2005. *A Guide to Research in the Social Sciences*. Pearson: Prentice Hall.

Jenkins, H. 2008. *Convergence Culture, where old and new media collide*. New York, N.Y.: New York University Press.

Jenkins, H. 2013. *Spreadable media: Creating Value and Meaning in a networked culture*. Columbia: University of Missouri.

Jistem, B. 2017. The Literature Review of Technology Adoption Model and theories for the Novelty technology. *Journal of Information Systems and Technology Management*, 14 (1): 21-38.

Jones, E.H. and Mills, J. 2019. Cognitive Dissonance: Re-examining a pivotal theory in psychology 2nd edition American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000135-000> (Accessed on 04 March 2020).

Kaiser, K. 2009. Protecting respondent confidentiality in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 19(11), 1632-1641. <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1049732309350879>ois. (Accessed on 25 September 2017).

Kelman, H.C. 1958. *Compliance, identification and internalization. The processes of attitude change*, 2 (1): 51-60.

Khosrow, M.M. 2014. *Inventive Approaches for Technology Integration and Information Resources Management*. Kingston: IGI Global. <http://www.worldcat.org>. (Accessed on 17 September 2019).

Kress, J. and Giust A. 2019 Elements of Research Questions in Relation to Qualitative Inquiry. *The Qualitative Report*, 24 (1): 24-30.

- LaMorte, W.W. 2018. Behavioural Change Models .Retrieved from: <https://sphweb.bumc.bu.edu/otlt/mphmodules/sb/behavioralchangetheories/index.html> (Accessed on 13 May 2019).
- Lavrakas, J. 2008. Population Parameter: *Encyclopaedia of Survey Research Methods*. California: Sage.
- Langkos, S. 2014. Chapter 3 Research Methodology: Data collection method and research tools. Derby: University of Derby Press.
- Lewis, A. 1999. The issue of Perception and some Educational Implications. Dissertation, Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- Loeb, S. Dynarski, S. McFarland, D. Morris, P. Reardon, S. and Rober, S. 2017. Descriptive Analysis in Education: A guide for Researchers. Washington, D.C.: University of Michigan Press.
- Louw, B.S. 2013. Adaptive or maladaptive: exploring adolescent's responses to online persuasion attempts Pretoria: University of South Africa. <http://hdl.handle.net///105001103697> (Accessed on 16 February 2020).
- Lunceford, B. 2009. Reconsidering Technology Adoption and Resistance. Observations of a Semi -Luddite Hampton Press, Inc. and MEA Volume 8 (1): 29-48.
- Ma, Q. 2005. The Technology Acceptance Model: A Meta – Analysis of Empirical Findings. Warrensburg, M.O.: Central Missouri State University.
- McKee, H.A. and Porter, J.E. 2017. Professional Communication and Network Interaction: A Rhetorical and Ethical Approach. New York, N.Y.: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.
- McLuhan, M. 2001. The Medium is the Message an Invention of Effects. C.A.: Gingko Press.
- Mc Quail, D. 2010. Mass Communication Theory 6th edition. Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam.
- McLeod, D. and Perryman, M. 2017. Thinking about the Media: A review of Theory and Research on Media Perceptions, Media Effects Perceptions and their Consequences. *Review of Communication Research Journal University of Wisconsin Madison*, 5 (35): 35-83.
- McLeod, S.A. 2018. Cognitive Dissonance Simply Psychology. Retrieved from [https://www.simplypsychology.org/cognitive dissonance.html](https://www.simplypsychology.org/cognitive%20dissonance.html). (Accessed 16 February 2020).
- Mc Quails, D. 2010. *Mass Communication Theory*. London: Sage Publications.

- Megan, A.M. and Koff, R. 2016. Media Theories and the Facebook Influence model in *The Psychology of Social Networking*, (1):130-142.
- Mishke, C. 2012. Workplace Privacy, Email Interception and the Law: *Contemporary Labour Law*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria, (9): 81- 90.
- Mohajan, H. 2018. Qualitative Research Methodology in Social Sciences and Related Subjects, *Journal of Economic Development Environment and People*, 7 (1): 23-48.
- Monfils, B.S. 2000. *Implications of Communication and Globalisation for Future Research Communication and Global Society*. New York, N.Y.: Peter Lang.
- Morte, W.W. 2019. *Behavioural Change Models Theory of Planned Behaviour*. Boston: University of Public Health.
- Muller Rommel, F. 2016. An introduction of Descriptive Analysis its advantages and disadvantages. Research Paper. Luneburg: University of Luneburg.
- Myers, D.G. 2010. Module 47: *Contemporary Research on Personality Psychology in Modules* 9th Edition. New York, N.Y.: Worth Publishers.
- Naderifar, M. Goli, H. and Ghaljale, F. 2017. Snowball Sampling: A purposeful Method of Sampling in Qualitative Research. Research paper. Zabol: Zabol University of Medical Sciences.
- Newman, N. 2011. Mainstream Media and the distribution of news in the age of social discovery. Oxford: University of Oxford. <https://reuters.institution.politics.ox.ac.uk/risj-review/mainstream-media-and-the-distribution-news-age-social-discovery>. (Accessed on 12 April 2018).
- Obiter, S. 2014. Social Media and Action Injuriarium in South Africa - *An exploration of New Challenges in the Online Era*: Notes. Obiter 35 (3):616-628.
- Olumide, O. 2016. Technology Acceptance Model as a Predictor of Using Information Systems to Acquire Information Literacy Skills. Nebraska: University of Nebraska Lincoln.
- Patton, M.O. and Cochian, M. 2002. A guide to using Qualitative Research Methodology Medecins Sans Frontieres. *Open Journal of Business Management*, 4(4): 3- 37.
- Punch, K.F. 1998. *Introduction to Social research*. Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches. London: Sage.
- Qiong, O.U. 2017. *A Brief introduction to perceptions*, Research paper. Toronto: Canada Securities Institute.

- Raman, A. 2015. The role of Social Media in Creating and Maintaining Social Networks including its impact on Enhancing Competitive Positioning with the Education Sector. Kingdon IGI Global. <https://www.igi.global.com>. (Accessed on 15 October 2018).
- Rice, R.E. 1995. Media Appropriateness: *Using Social Presence Theory to Compare Traditional and New organizational media*, 19 (4): 451-484.
- Roos, A. 2012. Privacy in the Facebook era: *The South African Law Journal*, 129 (2): 377.
- Safura, K.M. 2016. Consumer Perception of Real time Marketing Tools used by Retailers in Gauteng South Africa, Masters. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- Samoriski, J. 2002. Issues in cyberspace Communication, Technology, Law and Society on the Internet. California. C.A: Stanford University.
- Schroeder, R. 2018. Social theory after the internet, Media Technology and Globalisation. London: UCL Press. www.oapen.org/search? Identifier =648367 (Accessed on 4 March 2020).
- Segaard, S.B. 2015. Perceptions of Social Media: *A Joint arena for voters and politicians*. 36 (2): 65-78.
- Shawar, N. 2007. Attitude Construction Evaluation in Context of *Social Cognition*, 25 (5): 65-78.
- Shuter, R. 2001. Ethical Issues In Global Communication. Milwaukee: Marquette University.
- Silvius, G. 2016. Strategic integration of social media into Project Management Practice. Leiden. ITG Global.
- Singh, A. and Duhan P. 2016. Managing Public Relations and Brand Image through social media. New Delhi: Meera Bai Institute of Technology India. (Accessed on 16 February 2020).
- Sniehotta, F.F. Pesseau, J and Soares, A. 2013. Time to Retire the Theory of Planned Behaviour. *Health Psychology Review*. 8 (1): 1-7.
- Suderman, P. 2018. 'The Slippery Slope of Regulating Social Media. Retrieved from <https://www.kyivpost.com/article/opinion/po-ed/peter-suderman-the-slippery-slope-of-regulating-social-media.html? cnreloaded-1>. (Accessed on 16 October 2017).
- Taherdoost, H. 2017. A Review of Technology Acceptance and Adoption Models and Theories. Interdisciplinary in engineering conference. Romania. www.sciencedirect.com (Accessed on 24 February 2020).

- Thurston, L.L 1928. "Attitudes can be measured" *American Journal of Sociology*, 33 (1):529-554.
- Trafimow, D.2020. Theory of Reasoned Action: A Case Study of Falsification in Psychology. *Theory and Psychology Journal*, 19 (4): 501- 518.
- Tuninga, B.V. and Saridakis, G. 2017. Analysing the Strategic Role of Social Networking in Firm Growth and Productivity. Birmingham: IGI Global.
- Vollstedt, M and Razat S. 2019. An introduction to Grounded Theory. Bremen: University of Bremen and University of Paderborn Germany. (Accessed on 17 June 2020).
- Wildermuth, S. 2000. *Social Exchange in Global Space, Communication and Global Society*. New York, N.Y.: Peter Lang.
- Williams, C. 2007. *Research Methods*. *Journal of Business and Economic Research* 5 (3): 65-72.
- Winston, M.A. 2017. China's Mobile Economy: Opportunities in the Largest and Fastest Information Consumption Boom. Retrieved from: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com>. (Accessed on 11 October 2018)
- Zalter, J.R. and Feldman.S.1992.A simple theory of the survey response: *American Journal of Political Science*, 36(3): 579-616.

APPENDICES



COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

17 September 2018

Dear Vainah Gumise

NHREC Registration # : Rec-240816-052

CREC Reference # : 2018-CHS-0051

Name : Vainah Gumise

Student #: 61564281

Decision:
Ethics Approval from 17 September 2018 to 16 September 2021

Researcher(s): Vainah Gumise

Supervisor(s): Dr S Sonderlig
Department of Communication Studies
stefansonderlig@me.com

Perceptions and attitudes towards digital media use in communication departments of regulatory authorities in Mbabane Eswatini.

Qualifications: Masters (Communication Science)

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for one year.

The *low risk application* was *reviewed and expedited* by the Chair of College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee on the 24 August 2018 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.



University of South Africa
Pretorius Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za



1st Floor RHUS Office Park, Karl Grant Street, Mbabane,
P.O. Box 7137, Mbabane, H100
Tel: (+268) 2404 2103/1439/8425
Fax: +268 2404 8474
Email: info@sera.org.sz
Website: www.sera.org.sz

20 November 2018

Vainah Gumasi
P.O Box A13
Swazi Plaza
Mbabane

Dear Madam,

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE ESWATINI
ENERGY REGULATORY AUTHORITY (ESERA)**

1. Reference is made to the above subject.
2. The Eswatini Energy Regulatory Authority (ESERA) acknowledges receipt of your letter wherein you invited the ESERA to participate in your study observing the perceptions and attitudes towards social media use in organizational communication.
3. The Authority hereby consents to participate in this study. You can contact Mr Sikhumbuzo Nkambule, Manager- Consumer and Stakeholder Management at nkumbulex@sera.co.sz for details pertaining to the data collection process.

Yours Sincerely

MR VUSUMUZI N. MKHUMANE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

REF: Research/2018/01

11 October 2018

Vainah Gumise
Student
University of South Africa (UNISA)
P.O. Box 392 UNISA 0003
SOUTH AFRICA

Dear Madam;

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT REASEARCH AT THE FINANCIAL
SERVICES REGULATORY AUTHORITY**

The Financial Services Regulatory Authority (FSRA) acknowledges receipt of your letter dated 26 September 2018 wherein you invited the FSRA to participate in your study observing the perceptions and attitudes towards social media use in organisational communication. The Authority hereby consents to participate in this study. You can contact Mr Mbuso Gamedze, Head of Stakeholder and Consumer Affairs at mbusog@fsra.co.sz for details pertaining to the data collection process.

Yours sincerely,



Nina Dlamini
ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Swaziland Investment Promotion Authority

1st Floor, Mbabane Office Park Building 1,
Mhlambanyatsi Road
P.O. Box 4194, Mbabane H100, Swaziland
Tel: +268 2404 0470/2/3/4
Fax: +268 2404 3374
Email: info@sipa.org.sz
Website: www.sipa.org.sz

REF: EIPA/RESEARCH/RS/01

8th February 2019

Ms Vainah Gumise

Student

University of South Africa

Dear Ms Gumise

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE ESWATINI INVESTMENT PROMOTION AUTHORITY

Your letter dated 28/09/18 refers.

The Eswatini investment Promotion Authority (EIPA) hereby grants you permission to conduct your study as introduced. We find that your study will greatly assist the organization in leveraging the benefits of social media as well as to develop and sustain an informed Communication Strategy at EIPA.

The Manager for Research and Strategy, Mr Linda Makhanya has been tasked with providing you with the necessary assistance in this regard. Please feel free to contact Mr Makhanya on +268 7802 4411 or by email to lindam@sipa.org.sz.

We look forward to receiving the final copy of your study and to future cooperation.

Yours Faithfully

MS. HANALORA STRYDOM
ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

RE :REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE SWAZILAND ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORITY SEA

Perceptions and attitudes towards social media use in communication departments of regulatory authorities in Mbabane Swaziland.

28/09/18

Rhus Office Park Lot 195
Karl Grant Street Mbabane
Environmental Information Officer
2404 6960
belusile@sea.org.sz

*ELO
Please action
d/10/18*



The Executive Director

I, Vainah Gumise am doing research with Stephan Sonderling a professor, in the Department of Communication Science towards an MA degree at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled Perceptions and attitudes towards social media use in communication departments of regulatory authorities in Mbabane Swaziland.

The aim of the study is to look into perceptions and attitudes towards social media use in organisational communication, in order to qualify or disqualify these perceptions and help improve social media communication amongst regulated authorities, entities and the general public.

Your organisation was selected due to the influential role it has in communications as a regulator. The study will entail the identification of perceptions and attitudes towards social media and the definition of social factors that motivate these perceptions. The researcher will conduct a literature review to capture the ideologies of other scholars and theorists on the subject.

Furthermore the researcher will collect data through questionnaires, one on one interviews, observational analysis, organizational records and electronic analytics where applicable to establish the characteristics of the target population. Simple random sampling will be employed.

Thereafter the researcher will outline and assess the research findings thus bringing out an objective outline of these perceptions and attitudes. This will leave stakeholder and consumer affairs departments of regulatory authorities in a position to embrace or neglect social media based on concrete research.

The benefits of this study include a broad and researched outline on the the pros and cons of social media use in organisational communication from varied scholars, alternate regulatory authorities and theorists. These postulations and outlines can help to objectively mould social media strategies for the said target population.

This research may expose the ideas behind the communication strategies of the regulatory authorities under study. However since regulatory authorities by nature do not engage in any commercial activity or complete for clients the risk cannot translate to the loss of sales and is minimal.

